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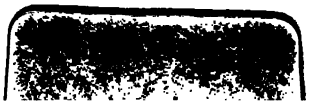

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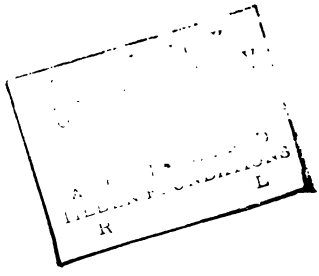

Execution of Beatrice Cenci.—THE CENCI.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

CELEBRATED CRIMES

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GEORGE BARRIE'S SONS

THE CENCI

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CELEBRATED CRIMES

THE CENCI

1598

If you chance to go to Rome and visit the Villa Pamfili, you will, in all probability, after passing some little time beneath its tall pines and along the shores of its watercourses, enjoying the shade and cool air which are so hard to find in the capital of Christendom, descend again toward Monte Janiculo by a lovely road which will take you by the Pauline Fountain. Having inspected that monument and paused for a moment on the terrace of the Church of St. Peter-in-Montorio, which commands a view of the whole city, you will visit the cloister of Bramante, in the centre of which is a little temple, half Greek and half Christian, its base several feet below the ground level, on the very spot where St. Peter was crucified. Then you will go up through a side door into the church itself. There the courteous cicerone will point out to you, in the first chapel at the right, the "Christ Scourged," of Sebastiano del Piombo, and in the third chapel at the left, a "Christ at the Sepulchre," by Fiamingo. When you have examined these two masterpieces at your leisure, he will lead you to either end of the transept and call your attention, on the one hand, to a picture upon slate by Talviati, and on

the other, to a painting by Vasari. Then, having pointed out a copy of Guido's "Martyrdom of St. Peter," over the grand altar, he will tell you that in that spot the divine Raphael's "Transfiguration" was worshiped by the faithful for three centuries, before it was carried away by the French in 1809. As it is probable that you will already have seen that wonderful achievement at the Vatican, where it has been lodged since it was restored to the pope by the allies in 1814, let him say on, and do you look about at the foot of the altar for a tombstone, which you will recognize by a cross and the one word *Orate.* Under that stone lies the body of Beatrice Cenci, whose tragic story must have made a deep and lasting impression upon your mind.

She was the daughter of Francesco Cenci. However little it may be believed that men are born in harmony with the age in which they are to live, and that certain ones represent all its virtue and in certain others all its vicious tendencies are inbred, it may, perhaps, be of interest to our readers to glance rapidly over the years immediately preceding the events which we propose to describe. Francesco Cenci will then appear to them as the very incarnation of the diabolism of the age in which he lived.

On the eleventh of August, 1492, after the protracted last illness of Innocent VIII., during which two hundred and twenty murders were committed in the streets of Rome, Alexander VI. ascended the papal throne.

The son of a sister of Pope Calixtus III., Rodrigo Lenzuoli Borgia, before he became cardinal, had had five children by Rose Vanozga, for whom he afterwards arranged a marriage with a wealthy Roman. These children were:

Francesco, who became Duke of Gandia;

Cæsar, who was first a bishop, then a cardinal, then Duc de Valentinois;

Lucrezia, who, after she had been the mistress of her father and her two brothers, was married four times: first, to Giovanni Sforza, Lord of Pesaro, whom she cast aside on the ground of his impotence; second, to Alphonzo, Duke of Bisiglia, who was assassinated at Cæsar's bidding; third, to Alphonzo of Este, Duke of Ferrara, from whom she was separated by her second divorce; fourth, to Alphonzo, of Aragon, who was, in the first place, stabbed by bravos on the steps of St. Peter's, and strangled three weeks later because he did not die quickly enough of his wounds, which were mortal none the less:

Guiffry, Prince of Squillace, of whom very little is known; and a

Fourth son, of whom nothing whatever is known.

The most famous of the brothers was Cæsar Borgia. He had made all his plans to be King of Italy at his father's death, and his measures were taken in such way as to leave no doubt in his own mind of the success of his scheme. Every contingency was provided for but one; but that one, not Satan himself could have foreseen. The reader shall judge for himself.

The pope invited Cardinal Adrian to take supper at his Villa Belvidere. Cardinal Adrian was enormously wealthy and the pope was anxious to inherit his possessions as he had already inherited those of the Cardinals of St. Angelo, Capua and Modena. To that end Cæsar Borgia sent two bottles of poisoned wine to his father's butler, without taking him into his confidence; he simply instructed him not to serve the wine in those particular bottles until he (Cæsar) should order him to do so: unfortunately, during supper, the butler left the room

for a moment and while he was absent a stupid servant opened the fatal bottles for the pope, Cæsar Borgia and the Cardinal of Corneto.

Alexander VI. died within a short time; Cæsar was confined to his bed, when his skin entirely changed; and the Cardinal of Corneto lost his sight and his mental powers and was long at the point of death.

Pius III. succeeded Alexander VI. and reigned twenty-five days; on the twenty-sixth he was poisoned.

There were eighteen Spanish cardinals who owed their admission to the Sacred College to Cæsar Borgia; these cardinals were absolutely under his control and he could do with them as he pleased. As he was still grievously ill, and could do nothing for himself, he sold them all to Giulio della Rovere, and Giulio della Rovere was chosen pope under the name of Julius II. The Rome of Nero gave place to the Athens of Pericles.

Leo X. followed Julius II. and under his pontificate Christianity assumed a pagan form which spread from art to manners and gave a strange aspect to the period. Crime disappeared for the moment to give place to vice, but to vice in most seductive forms, such as Alcibiades affected and Catullus sang. Leo X. died after a reign of eight years eight months and nineteen days, during which he assembled at Rome Michel Angelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Correggio, Titian, Andrea del Sarto, Frate, Giulio Romano, Ariosto, Guicciardini and Machiavelli.

Giulio dei Medici and Pompeio Colonna were in train to succeed him. As they were both clever politicians, experienced courtiers and, more than that, men of real ability, and very evenly matched, neither could obtain a majority, and the conclave was prolonged unconscionably, to the great disgust of the cardinals. And so

it happened one day that a certain cardinal, who was more disgusted than his brethren, suggested that they should choose, instead of Medici or Colonna, the son of a weaver, or, as some claimed, of a brewer, of Utrecht, who had not previously been thought of, and who was at the time viceroy in Spain in the absence of Charles V. The joke was enthusiastically received by all the cardinals and Adrian was chosen pope by the merest accident.

He was a thorough Fleming and did not know a word of Italian. When he arrived at Rome and saw the masterpieces of Greek art which Leo X. had collected at great expense, he proposed to destroy them all, crying: *Sunt idola anticorum!*

His first act was to send the nuncio Francesco Chieregato to the Diet at Nuremberg, which was convened to deal with the schism threatened by Luther, with instructions which give an idea of the morals of the time.

"Admit frankly," he said, "that God has allowed this schism and this persecution because of the sins of mankind, and especially those of the priests and prelates of the Church, for we know that many abominable things have happened in the Holy See itself."

Adrian sought to lead the Romans back to the simple and austere manners of the primitive Church, and with that end in view extended his reforms to the smallest details. For instance, of the hundred grooms employed by Leo X. he kept but twelve, so that he might have two more than the cardinals, he said.

Such a pope could not reign long; he died at the end of a year. The day after his death his physician's door was found to be adorned with wreaths of flowers, with this inscription: "*To the liberator of the country!*"

Giulio dei Medici and Pompeio Colonna entered the lists again. The intriguing recommenced and the conclave

was so divided that the cardinals thought at one time that they would be forced to resort again to the expedient of electing some third candidate. They were already beginning to talk about Cardinal Orsini, when Giulio dei Medici conceived an ingenious scheme. He lacked five votes; five of his supporters offered to bet with five of Colonna's a hundred thousand ducats to ten thousand that Giulio dei Medici would not be chosen. On the first ballot following the bet he secured the five votes which he needed. There was nothing to be said; the cardinals did not sell their votes, they simply bet against themselves.

The result was that on the eighteenth of November, 1523, Giulio dei Medici was proclaimed pope under the name of Clement VII. The same day he generously reimbursed his five partisans the five hundred thousand crowns they had lost.

It was while he was pope and during the seven months that Rome looked on in horror at the shocking profanation of sacred things by the Lutheran troops of the Constable of Bourbon, that Francesco Cenci was born.

He was the son of Monsignor Nicolo Cenci, apostolic treasurer during the pontificate of Pius III. As that venerable prelate devoted his attention almost exclusively to the spiritual affairs of his realm rather than the temporal, Nicolo Cenci made the most of his indifference to worldly concerns and succeeded in amassing a fortune which yielded him a net income of a hundred and sixty thousand piastres, equal to almost two and a half million francs. Francesco Cenci was his only son, and inherited the whole of this vast wealth.

His youth was passed under the reign of popes who were so deeply engrossed by the schism of Luther that they had no time to think of anything else. The result was that Francesco Cenci, who was born with evil

instincts and was master of an immense fortune which enabled him to purchase impunity, abandoned himself without restraint to the gratification of his fierce ungovernable passions. Three times he was imprisoned for the infamous intrigues in which he indulged, and three times he purchased his release at an expense of two hundred thousand piastres. It should be said that the popes were much in need of money at this period.

It was under Gregory XIII. that Francesco Cenci began to attract particular attention. To be sure, the reign of that pope was wonderfully favorable to the development of such a reputation as that to which this strange Don Juan aspired. Under the rule of the Bolognese Buoncompagni, whoever could afford to pay his assassin and his judges could do whatsoever he chose. Rape and murder were so common that the judicial authorities hardly took note of such trifles unless someone was interested in hunting down the culprit. God rewarded the gentle Gregory for his indulgence; it was his privilege to see the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

At that time Francesco Cenci was a man of some forty-four or five years, five feet four inches in height, extremely well proportioned and very strong, although he seemed a trifle thin. His hair was just turning gray, he had large expressive eyes, although the upper lids drooped a little too much, a long nose, thin lips and a fascinating smile. His smile, by the way, was quick to change its character and become fairly fiendish when his eye fell upon an enemy; at such times, however little real cause he might have for emotion or irritation, he would be seized with a nervous trembling which often lasted long after its original cause had passed away. He was expert in all bodily exercises, especially horsemanship, and sometimes rode from Rome to Naples without

dismounting, although the distance between the two cities is forty-one leagues; he passed through the forest of San Germano and crossed the Pontine marshes without fear of brigands, although he was generally alone and sometimes without other weapons than a sword or dagger. When his horse fell from exhaustion he purchased another; if the owner refused to sell, he took it by force; if he resisted, he struck, and always with the point, never with the hilt. However, as he was known throughout the pope's dominions to be very open-handed, there was seldom any opposition to his wishes, some yielding through fear and others through self-interest. He was an atheistical, sacrilegious heathen, and never entered a church except to blaspheme. Many people claimed that he was always on the watch for strange adventures, and that there was no crime he would not commit if he thought that its commission would procure him a single unfamiliar sensation.

At forty-five he married a very wealthy woman, whose name is not to be found in any contemporary chronicle. She died after bearing seven children, five sons and two daughters. He then married Lucrezia Petroni, who, aside from her wonderfully fair complexion, was a perfect specimen of the Roman type of beauty. No children were born of his second marriage.

As if it were written that Francesco Cenci was to feel none of the sentiments which are natural to mankind, he detested his children and was at no pains to hide his detestation. One day, when a private chapel dedicated to St. Thomas was in process of erection in the court-yard of his magnificent palace beside the Tiber, he said to the architect, apropos of the plan for a burial vault which he desired him to draw:

"That's where I hope to put them all."

The architect often said afterward that he was terrified by the laugh which accompanied these words and that he would have refused to go on with the work had it not been for the handsome wages he was earning.

So it was that almost before his sons were able to walk he sent the three oldest, Giacomo, Cristoforo and Rocco, to the University of Salamanca, in Spain. He fancied, doubtless, that by sending them so far away he had gotten rid of them forever, for, as soon as they had gone, he dismissed them from his mind and neglected to send them any funds to provide for their support. After a few months of hardship and suffering the three young men were obliged to leave Salamanca. They returned through France and Italy afoot and barefooted, begging their way along, until they reached Rome, where they found their father more stern and cruel and unbending than ever.

It was in the early part of the reign of Clement VIII., who was renowned for his strict sense of justice. The three youths resolved to apply to him to command their father to make them a small allowance out of his immense wealth. They sought an interview with the pope at Frascati, where he was building the beautiful Villa Aldobrandini, and laid their case before him. The pope recognized the justice of their claim and forced Francesco to give each of them an allowance of two thousand crowns. Francesco did his utmost to evade the decree, but he received such precise orders that he had no choice but to obey.

About this time he was imprisoned for the third time for his disgraceful amours. His three sons then applied again to the pope, claiming that their father was dishonoring their name, and begging him to deal with him as severely as the law allowed. Clement was sorely

displeased at what he considered a most shameful proceeding, and ordered them out of his presence in disgrace.

Francesco extricated himself from this trouble as from the two earlier ones, by the lavish use of money.

It will be readily understood that this transaction did not transform Francesco's hatred for his children to devoted affection; but as his sons were able to keep clear of the paternal wrath, being made independent by the pension they had obtained, that wrath was all visited upon the heads of his two ill-fated daughters. Their situation soon became so intolerable that the elder, although very closely watched, succeeded in sending a petition to the pope setting forth the brutal treatment to which she was subjected, and imploring his Holiness to find a husband for her or to place her in a convent. Clement VIII. was moved to pity; he forced Francesco to give her a dowry of sixty thousand crowns and married her to Carlo Gabrielli, of a noble family of Gubbio. Francesco was nearly insane with wrath when this victim was torn from his clutches.

About the same time death came to the relief of two others. Rocco and Cristoforo were murdered, one by a butcher whose name is not known, and the other, a year later, by Paolo Corso, of Massa.

This somewhat allayed the chagrin of Francesco, who continued his niggardly treatment of his sons even after their death, for he told the priests that he would not contribute a farthing to the expense of the funeral services. The bodies were taken to the vault which had been built to receive them under his supervision, in the coffins provided for paupers, and when the second one was in its place he cried that he was very happy to be rid of two such wretched creatures, but that he should

not be completely happy until his five remaining children were laid beside them, and that when the last of them should be no more he would testify his delight by setting fire to his palace.

Meanwhile Francesco had taken all possible precautions to prevent his second daughter, Beatrice, from following the example of the first. She was at this time a child of twelve or thirteen, lovely and innocent as the angels. Her long fair hair (a feature which is so rare in Italy that Raphael thought it divine and bestowed it upon all of his Madonnas) fell in long curls below her shoulders, and when it was put aside from her face, revealed a brow of admirable proportions; her eyes, which were of a heavenly blue, beamed with a celestial expression; she was of middle height, her figure was graceful and well proportioned, and on the rare and brief occasions when her real character was enabled to manifest itself through her tears, it was seen to be animated, joyous and sympathetic, but at the same time firm and decided.

In order to make sure of her, Francesco kept her confined in an out-of-the-way corner of the palace, in a room of which he alone had the key. In that room her inflexible gaoler visited her every day to carry her food. Up to her thirteenth year he had been unchangeably harsh and brutal in his treatment of her, but soon after that, to poor Beatrice's great surprise, his manner to her softened to a very marked extent.

The reason was that she had ceased to be a child and had become a young woman; her beauty was blossoming like a flower, and Francesco, who recoiled at no crime, had conceived an unnatural passion for her.

It is easy to understand that Beatrice, brought up as she had been, entirely alone, even apart from her

stepmother, was as ignorant of evil as of good. It was therefore a much less difficult task to accomplish her ruin than another's, and yet Francesco resorted to every expedient his fiendish imagination could suggest to assist him in his demoniacal design.

For some weeks Beatrice was awakened every night by lovely music which seemed to her to come from Paradise. When she spoke of it to her father he encouraged the fancy, and told her that if she were a good, obedient child God would before long specially reward her by allowing her to see as well as hear.

And so, one night, as the young girl, half reclining in her bed, was listening to the ravishing strains, the door of her room was suddenly thrown open, and from the darkness which surrounded her she could look forth into brilliantly lighted apartments, heavy with such perfumes as one breathes in dreams. Handsome young men and lovely women, scantily clad, as she had seen them in Guido's and Raphael's pictures, were walking back and forth, apparently overflowing with mirth and good humor. They were the favorites, male and female, of Francesco, who being as wealthy as most kings, indulged, night after night, in such orgies as those with which Alexander celebrated the marriage of Lucrezia, and imitated the debauches of Tiberius at Caprea. The door remained open an hour; then the seductive vision vanished, leaving Beatrice in a state of mingled alarm and wonder.

The following night the same experience was repeated, but on that occasion Francesco entered his daughter's room and requested her to join the party. Without knowing why, Beatrice felt that it would be wrong for her to comply with her father's request; she replied that she did not see Lucrezia Petroni, her stepmother, among

the guests and that she did not dare to leave her bed to join a party of total strangers. Francesco begged and threatened, but his prayers and threats were equally futile. Beatrice buried herself in the bedclothes and obstinately refused to do as he wished.

The next night she lay down on the bed without undressing. At the same hour the door opened and the same performance was repeated. This time Lucrezia Petroni was among the women who passed Beatrice's door. Lucrezia was compelled by actual violence to allow herself to be made use of for that humiliating purpose, but Beatrice was too far away to detect the flush of shame on her cheeks and the tears in her eyes. Francesco called her attention to the fact that her stepmother, for whom she had looked in vain the night before, was present, and as she had no further pretext for refusing to comply, he led her blushing with confusion and embarrassment into the midst of the debauch.

There Beatrice saw many an unfamiliar and disgraceful sight!

Nevertheless she resisted for a long time; a voice within her breast told her that it was all a horrible thing; but Francesco showed the dogged persistence of a devil. He sought to add to the effect of these spectacles, which were calculated to arouse her passions, by repeating damnable falsehoods, calculated to lead her mind astray. He told her that the most blessed of all the saints adored by the Church were the offspring of the love of fathers for their daughters; and Beatrice was guilty of a heinous crime before she knew that it was so much as the least of sins.

After that his brutality overstepped all limits; he compelled Lucrezia and Beatrice to occupy the same bed, threatening his wife with instant death if she so much

as hinted to his daughter the revolting nature of the life they were leading.

Matters remained in this state for about three years. It then happened that Francesco was obliged to leave Rome for some time, and had no choice but to leave the women alone and free. Lucrezia's first act was to disclose to Beatrice the horror of their mode of life; and together they prepared a memorial to the pope, wherein they laid bare all that they had been forced to endure in the way of bodily abuse and outrage. But Francesco, before his departure, had provided for just that contingency; everyone who had access to the pope was in his pay, or hoped to be hired by him, so that the petition never came to his Holiness' hands. The two poor creatures remembered that Clement VIII. long before ordered Giacomo, Cristoforo and Rocco out of his presence; they supposed that they were included in the proscription and gave themselves up for lost.

At this juncture, Giacomo availed himself of his father's absence to call upon Beatrice with one of his friends, Abbé Guerra. He was a young man of twenty-five or six years and belonged to one of the noblest Roman families; he was naturally warm-hearted, impulsive and resolute, and was held up by all of the gentler sex as the type of manly beauty. His blue eyes were marvelously soft and he had long, fair hair, with light brown beard and eyebrows; add to these a pleasant, vibrating voice, a wonderful power of eloquent speech and vast stores of knowledge, and you can form some idea of the Abbé Guerra.

He fell madly in love with Beatrice at first sight; nor was she, on her side, slow to respond to the handsome young churchman's advances. The Council of Trent had not then been held, and consequently it was

not unlawful for ecclesiastics to marry. It was agreed that when Francesco returned the Abbé Guerra should ask him for his daughter's hand; meanwhile the women, happy in their master's absence, passed their days dreaming of a brighter future.

After an absence of three or four months, during which they were entirely in the dark as to his whereabouts, Francesco returned. The very first night he undertook to go on as before, but Beatrice was no longer the same; the timid, yielding child had become an outraged, insulted young woman; she resisted entreaties, threats and blows; her new-born love made her strong and unyielding.

Francesco's wrath fell upon his wife, whom he accused of betraying him; he beat her cruelly with a stick. Lucrezia Petroni was a veritable Roman she-wolf, passionate in love and passionate in the pursuit of revenge; she endured everything, but forgave nothing.

A few days passed and the Abbé Guerra called upon Francesco Cenci to carry out the plan agreed upon. Guerra was wealthy, young, handsome and nobly born; he combined all the qualities which seemed to justify hope, and yet he was unceremoniously shown the door by Francesco. This first failure did not discourage him, however; he returned to the charge again and again, insisting strongly upon the many advantages to be derived from the match. At last Francesco lost his patience and informed the persistent suitor that there was a conclusive reason why Beatrice should not be his wife nor any other man's. Guerra asked what the reason was, and Francesco replied:

"She is my mistress."

Monsignor Guerra was horrified at such an assertion from a father's lips, although at first he did not believe

a word of it; but when he noticed the smile with which Francesco accompanied his words, he was forced to believe that, terrible as it was, he had spoken the truth.

For three days Guerra was unable to see Beatrice, but at last he succeeded. His last hope was that she would deny the frightful charge, but she made a full confession. Thenceforth there was no hope of happiness on earth for the lovers; an impassable abyss lay between them. They parted in tears with mutual promises of undying love.

As yet the two women had formed no resolution to gain their freedom by crime, and perhaps everything would have gone on without an open scandal had not Francesco entered his daughter's chamber one night and forced her by violence to do his bidding. After that he was irrevocably doomed.

As we have said, Beatrice was by nature no less inclined to the loftiest than to the most debased sentiments; she might, if properly guided, have reached a high level of virtue as easily as she descended to the lowest depths of villainy.

She went to her stepmother and told her of the last outrage to which she had been subjected. The story awoke the older woman's memory of the wrongs she had suffered, and, as each of them excited the passions of the other, they agreed that Francesco must die.

Guerra was summoned to the council of death. His heart was overflowing with hatred and asked nothing better than vengeance. He agreed to seek out Giacomo Cenci, without whose concurrence the women were unwilling to go forward, as he, being the eldest, was the head of the family. Giacomo readily entered into the plot. The reader will remember what he had suffered long before at his father's hand; since then he had

been married, and the inflexible old man had left him and his wife and children in poverty.

Monsignor Guerra's apartments were selected as head-quarters to arrange the details of the scheme. Giacomo furnished one bravo named Marzio, and Guerra another named Olympio. Each had reasons of his own for taking part in the affair, one being influenced by love, the other by hatred.

Marzio, who was in Giacomo's service, had seen Beatrice several times and had fallen in love with her, but with one of those mute, hopeless passions which devour the heart. As soon as he knew that the crime in which he was asked to take part would bring him near Beatrice, he accepted without asking any further questions.

As to Olympio he hated Francesco because he was the means of his losing his position as chatelain of Rocco-Petrella, a fortress castle in the Kingdom of Naples, belonging to Prince Colonna. Francesco was accustomed to pass several months at Rocco-Petrella nearly every year; for Prince Colonna, who lived in magnificent style and was extravagant to the last degree, often was in sore need of funds, and as Francesco's purse was always open to him, he exhibited the utmost consideration for his wealthy friend. And so when Francesco, having reason to be displeased with Olympio, complained to Prince Colonna, Olympio was discharged.

After several consultations, at which each of the conspirators offered his or her opinion, the following plan was agreed upon by the two women, Giacomo and Guerra, Marzio and Olympio.

The time of year when Francesco was in the habit of going to Rocco-Petrella was near at hand; it was agreed that Olympio, who had an extensive acquaintance in

the neighborhood, should get together ten or twelve Neapolitan brigands, who should conceal themselves in a certain forest through which his road lay, and, upon being advised of the departure of Francesco, should carry him off with all his family. Thereupon a large sum would be demanded by way of ransom; the sons would be sent to Rome to procure it, but would pretend to be unable to do so, until the time fixed by the bandits had expired and they had put Francesco to death. In this way they would avoid all suspicion of complicity and the real murderers would escape.

But although the plan was cleverly conceived, it failed of success. When Francesco left Rome, the messenger sent by the conspirators to warn the brigands could not find them, and, as they were not warned in time, they reached the road too late and failed to carry out their part of the agreement. Francesco had passed, and reached Rocco-Petrella safe and sound.

The brigands after spending some time wandering about to no purpose realized that their prey had eluded them, and as they did not choose to remain longer in a neighborhood where they had already been prowling for a week, they determined to attempt some more promising exploit elsewhere.

Meanwhile Francesco had taken up his quarters in the fortress, and in order to be more at liberty to tyrannize over Lucrezia and Beatrice, he sent Giacomo and his two younger sons back to Rome. He then renewed his infamous attempts to coerce Beatrice and was so persistent in his persecution that she resolved to do with her own hand the deed that she proposed at first to entrust to others.

Olympio and Marzio, who had nothing to fear from the authorities, were still prowling about in the vicinity:

one day Beatrice spied them from her window and signaled that she had something to say to them. The following night Olympio, who knew all the ins and outs of the fortress from having been its chatelain, succeeded in gaining admission with his companion.

Beatrice was awaiting them at a small window looking upon a secluded courtyard and handed them the letters she had written for Giacomo and Monsignor Guerra. She requested Giacomo to signify his approval of her purpose to slay her father, as he had done before, for she was unwilling to act against his judgment. To Monsignor Guerra she applied for a thousand piastres, half of the sum she had agreed to pay Olympio. Marzio, for his part, was ready to do anything for love of Beatrice, whom he continued to worship as if she were a Madonna. The girl noticed his devotion and gave him a beautiful scarlet cloak embroidered with gold lace, telling him to wear it for love of her. The balance of Olympio's hire was to be paid by the two women when Francesco's death should have put them in possession of his fortune.

The bravos took their leave, and the prisoners anxiously awaited their return. On the day appointed they made their appearance, armed with Guerra's thousand piastres and Giacomo's approval. There was therefore nothing to occasion any further delay in the execution of their horrible purpose, and it was fixed for the eighth of September, the festival of the Nativity of the Virgin. But Signora Lucrezia, who was very devout at heart, refused, when she realized what day it was, to commit the double sin; and so it was postponed until the following day.

On September 9, 1598, the two women, as they sat at supper with the old man, poured opium into his glass

and did it so cleverly that he did not detect it, although it was very difficult to deceive him. He drank off the narcotized liquor and was soon sleeping heavily.

Marzio and Olympio had been admitted to the fortress the night before, and remained in hiding all night and all through the day; for, as we have just said, the crime was to have been perpetrated the night before, and was postponed in deference to Signora Lucrezia's religious scruples. About midnight Beatrice called them from their hiding place and led them to her father's room, opening the door with her own hand. The assassins entered and the two women waited in the adjoining room.

An instant later the men reappeared, pale and trembling, and from the way in which they shook their heads without speaking, the women realized that they had done nothing.

"What's the matter, in God's name?" cried Beatrice; "why do you hold your hands?"

"It is base and cowardly," the assassins replied, "to kill a poor old man in his sleep. When we thought of his age, we were seized with pity for him."

Beatrice tossed her head scornfully and in a deep, hollow voice began to mock at them.

"So you men, who boast of your strength and courage, are afraid to kill an old man in his sleep! How would it be, pray, if he were awake? Is it for this you take our money? Very well! as your cowardice forces me to it, I will kill my father myself; but, mark my words! you will not long survive him."

Her contemptuous words made the villains blush for their weakness; they signified by signs that they would do as they had agreed, and went back into the room, accompanied by the two women. A ray of moonlight

was streaming in through the open window full upon the calm face of the old man, whose white hair had moved the assassins to pity.

The second time they were inaccessible to any such emotion. One of them had two long nails such as might have been used at the crucifixion of the Saviour, and the other a hammer. The former placed the point of one of the nails on the old man's eye, and he who held the hammer drove it into the brain. The other nail they buried in the throat in like manner, and thus was the poor, crime-laden soul cast violently forth from the body, which fell from the bed and lay writhing in agony on the floor.

Thereupon Beatrice, faithful to her promise, handed the ruffians a heavy purse containing the balance of the stipulated sum and dismissed them.

As soon as they were alone, the two women removed the nails from the wounds, wrapped the body in a sheet, and dragged it through several rooms with the purpose of taking it to a small balcony and throwing it down into an unfrequented garden. They expected that in this way people would be led to believe that the old man had accidentally fallen in the darkness as he was going to a cabinet at the end of the gallery. When they reached the door of the last room they had to pass through, their strength failed them and they stopped for a moment to rest. Just then Lucrezia spied Olympio and Marzio, who were dividing the money before leaving the castle, and summoned them to their assistance; they obeyed and carried the body to the balcony and there at a spot pointed out by Lucrezia and Beatrice, tossed it off into the branches of an elder tree, where it caught and hung.

Everything happened as Beatrice and her stepmother

anticipated. In the morning when the body was found in the elder tree everyone supposed that Francesco had slipped on the balcony, which had no balustrade, and had fallen and met his death in that way; and so no one paid any attention to the wounds made by the nails in the general disfigurement of the body. The women, as soon as they heard of the catastrophe, made a terrible outcry and wept copiously, so that, even if anyone had conceived the slightest suspicion in their regard, such profound and *sincere* grief must have put it to flight on the instant.

The only person in whose mind suspicion found a place was the laundress of the castle, to whom Beatrice handed the sheet the body was wrapped in to be washed. She explained the great quantity of blood upon it by a story which the laundress believed or pretended to believe; at all events, she did not mention the circumstance at the time, and when the body had been duly consigned to the tomb, the two women returned without molestation to Rome, flattering themselves that at last they were to lead a peaceful, happy life.

While they were living on without anxiety, but not, perhaps, without remorse, divine justice was beginning its work of retribution. The Neapolitan court had been informed of the sudden death of Francesco Cenci, and, some suspicion having arisen that it was not due to natural causes, a royal commissioner was sent to Petrella to have the body exhumed and examined to see if it bore any traces of assassination, assuming that he died by the hand of an assassin. Immediately upon the arrival of the commissioner, all the occupants of the castle were arrested and taken in chains to Naples. But no indication of foul play was found, nor was any testimony given looking in that direction, except the

deposition of the laundress, who declared that Beatrice gave her a bloodstained sheet to wash. But this was of crushing effect, for, when she was asked whether the explanation given by Beatrice satisfactorily accounted for the presence of the blood on the sheet, she gave what seemed convincing reasons to the contrary.

This deposition was sent to Rome, but evidently was not deemed to be of sufficient importance to call for the arrest of the family. Several months passed, during which the youngest of the sons died, and still they were not molested. Of the five brothers, but two were now left: Giacomo, the oldest, and Bernardo, the youngest save one. In this interval they might have escaped by flight to Venice or Florence; but the idea never occurred to them, and they remained at Rome, waiting for what time might bring forth.

Meanwhile Monsignor Guerra learned that Marzio and Olympio had been noticed prowling around the castle during the days immediately preceding Francesco's death, and that the Neapolitan police had ordered their arrest.

Monsignor Guerra was a wary fellow whom it was difficult to catch napping when he was warned in time. He hired two other bravos to murder Olympio and Marzio. The one to whose tender mercies Olympio was commended fell in with him at Terni and stabbed him conscientiously, as he had agreed to do; but the one who was to make an end of Marzio unfortunately did not reach Naples until the day after the assassin was taken into custody.

When put to the question, Marzio made a full confession.

His deposition was sent to Rome, whither he was shortly to follow, to be confronted with those whom he

accused. At the same time Giacomo, Bernardo, Lucrezia and Beatrice were placed under arrest and were confined at first in their father's palace under a strong guard of *sbirri*. But before long, as the chain of evidence tightened around them, they were transferred to the castle of Corte Savella and there confronted with Marzio. They obstinately denied, not only their participation in the crime, but any knowledge of the assassin. Beatrice especially exhibited most extraordinary assurance; she demanded to be the first to be brought face to face with Marzio, and maintained with so much dignity and calmness that the accusing witness lied, that he, to whom she seemed lovelier than ever, determined to save her life by his death, as he could not live for her. He declared that everything he had thus far said was false, and that he begged God and Beatrice to forgive him. Neither threats nor torture availed to make him say aught else, and he died in the most horrible agony with his mouth tightly closed.

The Cenci believed that they were saved; but God, in His infinite wisdom, decreed otherwise. The ruffian who had stabbed Olympio was arrested about this time for another crime. As he had no reason to conceal one of his crimes more than another, he confessed that he was hired by Monsignor Guerra to relieve him from certain apprehensions concerning an assassin named Olympio.

Luckily Guerra learned of his danger in time; he was, as we have said, a very clever man, and he did not give way to fear or discouragement as almost any other man would have done in his place. It happened that when the news reached him the man who supplied him with charcoal was at his house; he called him into his dressing room and began by giving him a handsome

sum to purchase his silence; then he paid him their weight in gold for the dirty, worn-out clothes he wore, cut off his long curls, of which he was so proud, dyed his beard, smeared his face, bought two asses and loaded them with charcoal, and went limping through the streets of Rome with his mouth full of black bread and onions, crying:

"Charcoal! Charcoal! Who'll buy?"

While all the *sbirri* in Rome were seeking him high and low, he left the city, fell in with a band of *condottieri*, and traveled with them to Naples, where he took ship; and no one ever knew what became of him. Some people said that he went to France and took service in a Swiss regiment in the pay of Henri IV., but there is no certainty about it.

The confession of the assassin and the disappearance of Monsignor Guerra removed all doubt as to the guilt of the Cenci, and they were transferred from the castle to the prison. The two brothers, when put to the question, had not the strength to resist, and confessed their guilt. Lucrezia Petroni, too, was so stout that she could not endure the torture of the cord and was no sooner raised from the ground than she begged to be let down again and made a full disclosure of all that she knew.

But Beatrice was immovable; neither promises, threats nor torture made any impression upon that resolute will and robust frame. She endured the whole with unflinching courage, and even the judge, Moscati, who was deservedly renowned for his skill in such matters, could not extract from her a single word which she did not choose to say. He referred the whole affair to Clement VIII., not venturing to assume any responsibility; and the pope, fearing that Moscati might have

been bewitched by the girl's beauty and have been too merciful in applying the torture, took the case out of his hands and entrusted it to another functionary known to be far removed from any susceptibility to tenderness.

He began again at the beginning, repeated every question, and when he found that Beatrice had been subjected to the "ordinary" torture only, ordered that what was known as the "ordinary and extraordinary" torture should be applied. This, as we have already said, was the torture of the cord, one of the most fiendish of all those which the ingenuity of man ever invented.

As these words—*the torture of the cord*—may not afford our readers a very clear idea of the variety of punishment which they denote, we will first go somewhat into detail on that subject, and then give an account of its application in this instance, copied from the documents preserved at the Vatican.

There were several varieties of torture in vogue at Rome; those most resorted to were the torture of the whistles, the torture by fire, the torture by preventing sleep, and the torture by the cord.

The torture of the whistles, which was the least severe, was used only upon children and old men; it consisted in forcing reeds cut in the shape of whistles between the victim's nails and the flesh beneath.

The torture by fire, which was frequently used before the torture by preventing sleep was invented, consisted in placing the soles of the sufferer's feet close to a hot fire, almost as our *chauffeurs* used to do.

The torture by preventing sleep, which was invented by Marsilius, consisted in forcing the accused person to sit astride a sharp wooden horse, five feet high; he was naked and his hands were tied to the horse behind his back; two men sat beside him and were relieved at

intervals of five hours; as soon as the poor man closed his eyes they roused him and prevented him from going to sleep. Marsilius says that he never saw a man hold out against that form of torture; but Marsiliusis inclined to boast. Farinacci says that out of a hundred persons subjected to this test, there were but five who did not confess. Even that proportion is very flattering to the inventor.

The torture of the cord, which was the most commonly used of all, was similar to what is known in France as the *estrapade.*

This last form of torture was divided into three degrees, the light, the severe and the very severe.

The first, or "light," degree consisted principally in the dread of what was to come next. The accused person was threatened with the torture, was taken to the torture chamber and undressed and the cords were bound around the wrists as if the torture was to be applied. Beyond the fear aroused by these preparations it will be noticed that there was a foretaste of the pain that might be expected in the compression of the wrists. This first degree often sufficed to extort a confession from women and faint-hearted men.

The second, or "severe," degree was applied as follows: when the victim was undressed and his hands bound behind his back, the cord was passed through a ring fastened to the ceiling and thence carried to a sort of winch, so that the victim could be raised or lowered gently or with a sudden jerk at the will of the judge. When the preliminaries were completed he was raised from the floor, while a *Pater Noster,* an *Ave Maria* or a *Miserere* was repeated; if he continued to deny, the length of time that he was suspended was doubled. This second degree, which marked the close of the "ordinary"

torture, was applied when the victim was probably guilty but the crime was not proved.

The third, or "very severe," degree with which the "extraordinary" torture began was thus applied: after the victim had been hung up by his wrists for a quarter or half or three-quarters of an hour, sometimes for a whole hour, he was set in motion by the torturer, who either swung him like a pendulum or let him drop suddenly and brought him up with a jerk some distance from the floor. If he resisted this test of his power to endure, which was almost unheard-of, for the cord cut the flesh to the bone, and the shock dislocated the joints, weights were fastened to the feet and the same process was repeated, the agony being doubled by the increased weight. This last form of torture was applied only when the crime was not only proved, but was of a particularly atrocious character, and was committed upon some sacred person, as the culprit's father, a cardinal, a powerful prince, or an eminent scholar.

We have seen that Beatrice was condemned to undergo the ordinary and extraordinary torture, and we know in what it consisted; now let us listen to the chronicler of the transaction:

"As she refused to admit anything whatsoever during the whole examination, we ordered two *sbirri* to take her to the torture chamber, where the torturer awaited her; there, after shaving her head, the torturer made her sit down upon the little stool, undressed her, removed her shoes, bound her hands behind her back and tied the cord to a rope which ran through a pulley set in the ceiling, and was then fastened to a wheel with four spokes, turned by two men.

"Before causing her to be lifted from the floor, we; questioned her again concerning the alleged parricide;

but notwithstanding the confessions of her brother and stepmother, which were read to her once more as signed by them, she persisted in her denial, saying: 'Work your will upon me; I have told you the truth, and I will tell you nothing else, even though I be torn limb from limb.'

"Whereupon we caused her to be raised to the height of about two feet by her hands, which were, as we have said, fastened to the rope; and, having left her in that position during the length of time necessary to recite a *Pater Noster*, we questioned her yet again as to the facts and circumstances of the said parricide; but she would say nothing different from what she had already said, nor reply in any other words than these: 'You are killing me! you are killing me!'

"We caused her to be raised still higher, to the height of about four feet, and began an *Ave Maria*, but before we had repeated half of our prayer, she pretended to swoon.

"We caused a jar of water to be thrown upon her head; the cool shower revived her, and she cried: 'My God! I am dead! you are killing me! my God!' but would make no different reply.

"We then caused her to be raised still higher and recited a *Miserere*, during which, instead of joining us in prayer, she struggled and shrieked, saying again and again: 'My God! my God!'

"Being questioned yet again as to said parricide, she refused to say anything except that she was innocent, and immediately fainted.

"Again we caused water to be thrown upon her; she recovered consciousness, opened her eyes, and cried: 'Oh! ye cursed executioners! you are killing me! you are killing me!' but would say nothing more.

"Thereupon the torturer raised her to the height of

ten feet, and we urged her again to tell us the truth; but, whether because she had lost the power of speech, or because she did not wish to speak, she made no other reply than a motion of the head which signified that she would not or could not say anything.

"Consequently we motioned to the executioner to loosen the rope, and she fell with all her weight from a height of ten feet to a point two feet from the floor; her arms were twisted completely around by the sudden wrench, she shrieked aloud and hung there apparently without life.

"We caused water to be thrown in her face; she came to herself and exclaimed again: 'Infamous assassins, you are killing me; but, though you tear my arms out of their sockets, I will tell you nothing else.'

"Thereupon we ordered that a fifty pound weight should be attached to her feet. But at that moment, the door opened and several voices cried out:

"'Enough! enough! do not torture her any longer.'"

The voices were those of Giacomo and Bernardo Cenci and Lucrezia Petroni. The judges, when they found it impossible to conquer Beatrice's obstinacy, ordered her to be confronted with all the other culprits, who had not seen one another in five months.

They rushed into the torture chamber and seeing Beatrice hanging there, with her arms dislocated and covered with the blood which flowed from her lacerated wrists, Giacomo cried:

"We committed the crime; now you must repent and save your soul, meet death with a brave heart and not invite this frightful torture."

Beatrice shook her head as if to wave away the pain.

"And so you choose to die!" she said. "Well, since you will have it so, so let it be."

She turned to the *sbirri*.

"Unbind me, read their examinations to me again, and what I ought to approve I will approve, what I ought to deny I will deny."

She was thereupon lowered to the floor and unbound: a barber surgeon *replaced her arms in the regular way;* the examinations were read to her as she requested and, as she had promised, she made a full confession.

Thereafter, at the request of the brothers, they were all taken to the same prison; but the next day Giacomo and Bernardo were taken to the dungeons of Tordinona; the two women remained where they were.

The pope, upon reading the confessions, which contained all the details of the crime, was so horrified that he ordered the culprits to be dragged through the streets of Rome, fastened to the tails of wild horses. But such a cruel sentence aroused universal sympathy, and several great personages, cardinals and princes, implored the Holy Father on their knees to modify his decree, or at least to permit the culprits to present their defence.

"Did they give their unhappy father time to present his," retorted Clement, "when they brutally and pitilessly murdered him?"

At last he was persuaded to grant a respite of three days.

The most eminent and famous advocates of Rome at once took hold of the soul-stirring cause, and set to work upon memorials and arguments; on the day fixed for hearing the cause, they appeared before his Holiness.

The first to speak was Nicolo dei Angeli, and from the very beginning his address was so eloquent and impassionate that it aroused the most intense excitement in the assemblage, which sufficiently testified its interest in the

culprits by the sympathetic shudders which ran through it. The pope, who was alarmed at the effect he produced, broke in unceremoniously upon his speech.

"It would seem," he said in a voice which trembled with indignation, "that there are those among our nobility who murder their father, and that there are advocates who will stoop to defend them. It is something that we would never have believed, it is something that we could never even have conceived to be possible!"

Upon this ominous outburst they all held their peace except Farinacci, who found courage in thinking of the sacred mission which he had on hand, and replied, with the utmost respect and the utmost firmness:

"Holy Father, we are not here to defend the guilty, but to save the innocent; for, if we succeed in proving that some of the accused parties acted legitimately in self-defence, I trust that they will seem pardonable in the eyes of your Holiness. Just as there are certain cases in which a father may put his child to death, so there are certain cases in which a child may put its father to death. Therefore we will speak at such time as it may please your Holiness to hear us."

Clement VIII. thereupon showed himself to be as forbearing as he had been angry a short time before, and listened attentively to the argument of Farinacci, who insisted that Francesco Cenci ceased to be a father on the day he outraged his daughter. He invoked, in proof of the outrage, the memorial sent by Beatrice to his Holiness, wherein she implored him, as her sister had done, to remove her from her father's house and place her in a convent. Unfortunately the memorial, as we have seen, had disappeared, and a most careful and thorough search in the secretary's department failed to reveal any trace of it.

The pope took all the documents in the case and dismissed the advocates, all of whom at once withdrew, with the exception of Altieri, who remained behind and knelt at the pope's feet, saying:

"Holy Father, I could not do otherwise than appear before your Holiness in this cause, being the advocate of the poor; but I humbly ask your pardon."

The pope benignly raised him from the floor and said:

"We did not wonder at you, but at the others, who apologize for them and defend them."

As the pope had become deeply interested in the cause, he passed the whole night considering it, in company with the Cardinal of San Marcello, a very intelligent man with much experience in such matters. Having completed his review of the evidence, he communicated the result to the advocates, who were well content with it, and began to hope that the lives of the condemned would be spared; for the general result of all the evidence was to prove that, although the children had risen against their father, all the wrong and all the outrages were committed by him, and in Beatrice's case were so atrocious and intolerable that she had, in a certain sense, been dragged by the hair of her head to the commission of this frightful crime by the tyranny, the villainy and the brutality of her father. Acting under the influence of this view of the matter, the pope ordered that the defendants should be confined in secret once more, and even allowed them to entertain a hope of life.

Rome breathed again, sharing the hope of the wretched family and as joyous as if this private pardon were the pardon of a prisoner of state; but the pope's kindly intentions were put to flight by the commission of another

serious crime. The Marchioness of Santa Croce, aged sixty, was murdered by her son Paolo in most atrocious fashion, with fifteen or twenty blows of a dagger, and all because she would not promise to make him her sole heir. The culprit made his escape.

Clement VIII. was alarmed by the occurrence of this murder, which was so similar to the other; but at the moment he was obliged to go to Monte Cavallo, where he was to consecrate a cardinal as titular incumbent of the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli on the following morning. But on the succeeding day, which was Friday, September 10, 1599, he sent for Monsignor Taverna, Governor of Rome, at eight o'clock in the morning.

"Monsignor," he said, "we place the case of the Cenci in your hands, that justice may be done, and as speedily as possible."

Monsignor Taverna at once left his Holiness and returned to his own palace, whither he summoned all the criminal judges of the city in consultation, the result being that the Cenci were condemned to death.

The sentence was soon noised abroad, and as the public interest in this ill-starred family steadily increased, many of the cardinals spent the whole night riding about, some on horseback and some in their carriages, seeking to obtain at least such a version of the decree that the women might be put to death privately in the prison, and also imploring pardon for Bernardo, a poor boy of fifteen, who took no part whatsoever in the crime, but was included in the condemnation. No one of them all spent so much time and trouble in this behalf as Cardinal Sforza, but he was unable to elicit anything from his Holiness whereon to base even the slightest hope. Farinacci, however, by arousing the pope's conscientious

scruples, succeeded in obtaining a promise that Bernardo's life should be spared; but he did not obtain it until the Saturday morning, and then only after long and persistent entreaty.

The society of the *Confortieri* sent a delegation to each of the prisons, Corte Savella and Tordinona, on the Friday night. The preparations for the enthralling drama which was to be enacted on the bridge of San Angelo required the whole night, and it was not until about five in the morning that the clerk entered the cell of Beatrice and Lucrezia Petroni to read their sentence.

They were both sound asleep, being entirely ignorant of the events of the last few days. The clerk awoke them to say that, as they had been tried and sentenced by their fellowmen, they must prepare to appear before God.

Beatrice was stunned by the blow at first; she could find no words in which to express her anguish, and rose from her bed staggering like a drunken woman; soon, however, her power of speech returned, and she began to shriek and groan. Lucrezia listened to the dread intelligence with more strength and resolution, and began to dress to go to the chapel, urging Beatrice to be more resigned; but she roamed about the room like a mad woman, wringing her hands and beating her head against the wall, crying: "To die! to die! I must die without warning on the scaffold! on the gallows! My God! my God!" In this way she worked herself into a terrible paroxysm, after which, her physical strength being exhausted, she recovered her strength of mind; thenceforth she was a perfect angel of humility and a miracle of steadfast courage.

Her first words were to request the presence of a notary to make her will. This request was at once granted

and, as soon as the man of the law arrived, she dictated its provisions with perfect calmness and lucidity. She concluded her will with a request that her body be placed in the Church of St. Peter-in-Montorio, which could be seen from her father's palace, and to which she was deeply attached. She left five hundred crowns to the nuns of the Stigmata, and ordered that marriage portions for fifty poor girls should be provided out of her dowry, which amounted to fifteen thousand crowns. For her place of interment she selected the foot of the great altar, over which was the superb painting of the "Transfiguration," which she had so often admired during her life.

Lucrezia, impelled by her example, set about providing for the final disposition of her person and property. She requested that her body be buried in the Church of St. George-in-Velabria, and made several bequests for religious objects. When this duty was satisfactorily performed, the two women joined with hearty accord in the worship of God; they fell upon their knees and began to recite the psalms and litanies, and the prayers for the dying.

They passed the whole day and until eight o'clock at night in their devotions, then asked for a confessor and heard mass, during which they partook of communion. The effect of these devout preparations for death upon Beatrice was to bring her to a most humble frame of mind, and she suggested to her stepmother that it would be unseemly for them to appear upon the scaffold in holiday attire. She therefore ordered dresses made after the general pattern of those worn by nuns, that is to say, cut very high in the neck, and plaited, and with long, flowing sleeves. Signora Lucrezia's was made of black cotton, and Beatrice's of taffeta. She also had a

small turban made to wear upon her head. These various articles were brought to them with cords to tie around their waists, and were laid on a chair beside them while they continued to pray.

The fatal hour arrived, and they were informed that they must prepare for the end. Thereupon Beatrice, who was still on her knees, rose to her feet with a calm, almost joyful expression upon her face.

"Mother," she said, "now our passion is about to begin; it is time for us to make ready and for the last time to assist each other to dress, as we have been accustomed to do."

They then donned the dresses we have described, tied the cords around their waists, and awaited the last summons.

Meanwhile the sentence had been read to Giacomo and Bernardo, and they too were awaiting the call of death. About ten o'clock the Society of Misericordia, a Florentine organization, arrived at the prison of Tordinona with the holy crucifix, and awaited the young people at the door. At that point there was very near being a serious accident. Many people were at the windows of the prison to see the victims come forth, and some one of them pushed out a large box filled with earth and flowers: it fell into the street, narrowly missing one of the brethren who was marching in front of the crucifix, with a lighted torch in his hand. The box passed so near the flame that the wind extinguished it.

At last the great doors swung open and Giacomo appeared upon the threshold; he at once fell upon his knees in adoration of the blessed crucifix. He wore a long, black cloak, which covered him from head to foot; beneath it his breast was bare, for his sentence provided that the executioner should tear his flesh with red hot

pincers, all the way from the prison to the scaffold. The pincers were heating in a chafing dish upon the cart. He climbed into the vehicle, where the executioner arranged him in the attitude best adapted for his purposes. Then Bernardo came out, and as soon as he appeared, the Fiscal of Rome stepped forward and addressed him thus:

"Signor Bernardo Cenci, in the name of our Blessed Redeemer, our Holy Father, the pope, spares your life, but orders that you accompany all your kindred to the scaffold, and there remain until they are dead, enjoining upon you to remember to pray for them with whom you were to die."

This unexpected announcement was greeted with a murmur of joy by the populace; the brethren at once removed the little board, which was tied over his eyes because, on account of his tender years, they thought that he ought not to be compelled to look upon the scaffold on which he was to die.

Thereupon the executioner, having arranged Giacomo to his satisfaction, alighted from the cart and inspected the pardon; he then removed Bernardo's shackles, placed him beside his brother and wrapped him in a superb cloak, fringed with gold, for the poor child's neck and shoulders were bare in anticipation of his execution.

Some persons were astonished to see so handsome a garment in the possession of an executioner; but it was rumored that it was the same cloak that Beatrice gave to Marzio as an incentive to murder her father, and that it fell to the executioner when he put Marzio to death.

The sight of the vast crowd had such an effect upon little Bernardo that he fainted.

The singing of psalms began, and the procession started for the prison of Corte Savella. There the blessed crucifix stopped before the door to await the coming of the women, who soon came forth and knelt upon the door-sill in adoration of the holy emblem; the procession then took up its line of march once more.

The two women walked, one after the other, behind the last line of the brethren. Signora Lucrezia, being a widow, wore a black veil, and high-heeled slippers of the same color with knots of black ribbon, which were fashionable at that time; while Beatrice, as an unmarried woman, wore a Basque cap of silk similar to her dress, with a cape edged with silver lace, which fell over her shoulders, and high-heeled white slippers, with bows of cherry ribbon, with gold fringe. The arms of both were left free, except for a cord passed loosely from one to the other, so that each of them could carry a crucifix in one hand and her handkerchief in the other.

During the night of Saturday a tall scaffold was erected on the square of the bridge of San Angelo, and the plank and the block were made ready upon it. Above the block, between two uprights, was a broad knife, sliding in grooves, which fell with all its weight upon the block when released by a spring.

The procession moved slowly along toward the bridge of San Angelo. Lucrezia, who was the weaker of the two women, wept bitterly, but Beatrice's face was calm and unmoved. When they reached their destination, the women were at once taken to a little chapel, where they were soon joined by Giacomo and Bernardo, and for a few moments the four were allowed to remain together. Giacomo and Bernardo were first led away to the scaffold, although one of them was to be executed

last of all, and the other was pardoned. When they came upon the platform Bernardo fainted a second time, and as the executioner went to his assistance, some of the spectators, thinking that he proposed to behead him, cried out: "He is pardoned!" The executioner reassured them and made Bernardo sit down near the block. Giacomo knelt on the other side.

The executioner then returned to the chapel and led out Signora Lucrezia, who was to be executed first. At the foot of the scaffold he bound her hands behind her back, tore away the upper part of her dress so as to lay bare her shoulders, and conjured her to seek forgiveness by kissing the wounds of the Christ. That done, he led her upon the scaffold, which it was very hard for her to ascend, as she was exceedingly stout. As soon as she was upon the platform he snatched away the veil which concealed her features. Poor Signora Lucrezia was bitterly mortified to be thus exposed to the public gaze with uncovered bosom, and as she glanced at the block a shudder ran through her frame, which made the whole assembly shudder in sympathy. With the tears streaming down her cheeks, she exclaimed falteringly:

"Oh, my God, have pity on me! and do you, my brothers, pray for my soul!"

She had no idea where to take her place, so she turned to Alexander, the chief executioner, and asked him what she must do. He told her to sit astride the plank and bend forward, which she did with great difficulty and profound mortification; but it was impossible for her, because of her great size, to place her neck upon the block, until it had been raised by placing a piece of wood beneath it. During all this time the poor woman was made to wait, suffering even more from the shame than from the fear of death; at last the

apparatus was satisfactorily arranged, the executioner touched the spring, and the head, severed from the body, fell upon the scaffold and rolled over two or three times, causing a thrill of horror among the spectators. The executioner lifted it up and showed it to the people, then wrapped it in a piece of black silk and placed it with the body in a coffin at the foot of the ladder leading to the scaffold.

While everything was being made ready for Beatrice, a tier of benches crowded with people gave way; many were killed by the disaster, and many more crippled and wounded.

When the apparatus was in order and the blood washed away, the executioner returned to the chapel for Beatrice, preceded by the crucifix. When she caught sight of the blessed emblem she hurriedly said a few short prayers; then, as her eyes fell upon the executioner with the cords in his hand, she cried:

"God grant that when you bind this body for its corruption, you may unbind the soul for eternity!"

With that, she rose and went out upon the square, where she devoutly kissed the wounds of the Christ, and, leaving her slippers upon the ground, ran quickly up the ladder. She had made inquiries beforehand as to what she was expected to do, so she quickly bestrode the plank, leaned forward and placed her neck upon the block with all possible speed, so that her bare shoulders might not be seen. But, notwithstanding the pains she took to have done with the affair as soon as possible, she was compelled to wait; for the pope, who knew her passionate disposition, feared that she might commit some sin between the time when she received absolution and her death, and so had given orders that a cannon should be fired from the tower of the castle of

San Angelo the moment that Beatrice ascended the scaffold. That order was complied with, to the vast astonishment of the assembled multitude; it was totally unexpected, most of all by Beatrice, who rose almost to an upright position. The pope, who was absorbed in prayer at Monte Cavallo, at once gave Beatrice absolution *in articulo mortis*. Some five minutes passed, while the victim waited, with her neck once more upon the block. When the executioner thought that the pope had had sufficient time to give her absolution, he pressed the spring and the knife fell.

Thereupon a most extraordinary thing took place; while the head rolled away on one side, the body recoiled, as if walking backwards. The executioner at once raised the head and showed it to the people: then he arranged it as he had done the other, and undertook to place Beatrice's body with her stepmother's; but the brethren of the Society of Misericordia took it from his hands and, as one of them attempted to place it in the coffin, it slipped through his hands and fell from the scaffold to the ground. In the fall, the clothes were all torn from her back, and her body was so smeared with dust and blood that it took a long while to wash it. At this sight poor Bernardo fainted a third time, and was unconscious so long that they were obliged to give him wine to revive him.

At last Giacomo's turn arrived. He had witnessed the death of his mother and his sister, and his clothes were covered with their blood. The executioner went to him and removed his cloak, exposing his breast all torn with the red-hot pincers; the wounds were so numerous that his body was literally covered with them. He at once stood erect, half naked as he was, and said to his brother:

"Bernardo, if I accused you or compromised you in any way in my examination I did it falsely and, although I have already contradicted what I then said, I say again, being about to appear before God, that you are entirely innocent, and that it is an atrocious perversion of justice which compels you to witness this frightful spectacle."

The executioner made him kneel, fastened his legs to one of the uprights which held the knife, bandaged his eyes, and shattered his skull with a club. He then, in full view of the multitude, cut his body into four pieces.

The butchery being at an end, the Society of Misericordia left the square, taking Bernardo with them. He was in a high fever and was at once put to bed and bled.

The bodies of the two women, each in its coffin, were placed in the shadow of the statue of St. Paul at the end of the bridge, with four torches of white wax which burned until four in the afternoon. At that hour they were taken, with the fragments of Giacomo's body, to St. John Beheaded. Finally, at nine in the evening, the body of the young girl, fairly buried in flowers, and dressed in the clothes in which she was executed, was borne to St. Peter-in-Montorio, surrounded by fifty torches, and accompanied by the brethren of the Stigmata and all the Franciscan monks in Rome; there it was laid, in accordance with her request, at the foot of the great altar.

The same evening Signora Lucrezia's request was likewise complied with and her body was taken to the Church of St. George-in-Velabria.

It may fairly be said that all Rome was present at this tragedy, and the carriages, horses, tumbrils and pedestrians were heaped upon one another. Unfortunately

the day was so intensely hot that many persons fainted, many were stricken with fever, and many died during the night, all from having stood in the blazing sun during the three hours that the execution lasted.

On the Tuesday following, September 14th, on the occasion of the festival of Santa Croce, the Society of St. Marcello, by special favor of the pope, effected the release of poor Bernardo Cenci from prison by binding themselves to pay during the year two thousand five hundred Roman crowns to the Society of the Holy Trinity of the Pont-Sixte, as may be found to-day recorded in its archives.

* * * * * * *

And now, having seen the tomb, if you desire to form a more definite opinion of her who reposes therein than you can gather from the story of her life, go to the Barberini Gallery, where you will find, with five other *chefs-d'œuvre*, the portrait of Beatrice, painted by Guido, some say during the night preceding her execution, and others, while she was on her way to the scaffold. It is a lovely head, clad in a turban with drapery falling gracefully from it; the hair is a light chestnut and very abundant, the eyes are black and seem to bear the trace of tears hardly wiped away, the nose is perfect in shape, and the mouth like a child's. The painting, however, affords a very inaccurate idea of her complexion, which was very fair, whereas the flesh in the portrait is almost brick-red. The subject seems to be from twenty to twenty-two years of age.

Near by is the portrait of Lucrezia Petroni; the size of the head makes it clear that it belonged to one who was below rather than above middle height. She is the perfect exemplar of the Roman matron in all her glory, with the classic outlines, ruddy complexion, straight nose,

black eyebrows, and the expression, at once imperious and languishing. In the centre of her plump, round cheeks, we see the charming dimples of which the chronicler speaks, and which gave her the appearance of smiling even after her death. Her mouth was perfect, and her hair curled over her forehead, and fell beside her temples in such a way as to make a frame of wondrous beauty for her face.

There are no known portraits of Giacomo and Bernardo in existence, and we are compelled to borrow a description of their persons from the manuscript to which we are indebted for all the details of this lurid story. The author, who was an eye-witness of the catastrophe in which they played prominent parts, describes them as follows:

Giacomo was short, with black hair and beard; he was apparently about twenty-six years old, very well built, and with great physical strength.

Poor Bernardo was the living image of his sister; so striking was the resemblance, that, when he came upon the scaffold, with his long hair and girlish face, many people thought at first that it was Beatrice. He was fourteen or fifteen years old.

May the peace of God be upon them!

MURAT

MURAT

1815

On the 18th June, 1815, at the very hour when the destiny of Europe hung in the balance at Waterloo, a man dressed in beggar's rags was walking quietly along the road from Toulon to Marseilles. When he reached the entrance of the Illioulles pass he halted upon a slight eminence, from which he could view all the surrounding country. It may be that that spot was the end of his journey, or that, before plunging into the rugged and gloomy defile, which is called the Thermopylæ of Provence, he desired to enjoy a little longer the superb prospect which lay before him towards the southern horizon; at all events, he sat down upon the embankment of the ditch which ran along by the road, turning his back to the mountains which rise like the sides of an amphitheatre to the north, and having consequently at his feet a fertile plain, thoroughly Asiatic in the luxuriance of its vegetation, and abounding in trees and shrubs unknown in other parts of France.

Beyond the plain, as it lay resplendent in the rays of the setting sun, stretched the sea, as calm and smooth as a mirror; a single brig of war was gliding lightly over the water, with all her sails spread to the fresh breeze, and making swift progress into Italian waters.

The beggar followed her eagerly with his eyes until she disappeared between the Cap de Gien and the first

of the Hyères Islands; and as soon as the cloud of white canvas was out of sight, he sighed deeply, let his head fall in his hands, and sat without moving, absorbed in thought, until he was aroused by the sound of horses' feet approaching. At that he raised his head quickly, shook his long black hair, as if he wished to drive from his brain the bitter thoughts which were weighing upon it, and fixed his eyes upon the entrance of the pass, whence the sound seemed to come. Soon two horsemen rode out into the open, and he doubtless recognized them, for he stood up to his full height, dropped the staff which he had in his hand, folded his arms and turned towards them. On their side, the new comers stopped as soon as they espied him, and the one who was riding ahead alighted from his horse, threw the rein over his companion's arm, and taking his hat in his hand, although he was quite fifty yards away from the man in tatters, walked forward respectfully to meet him. The beggar allowed him to approach, without himself making a movement of any sort, and maintaining an air of gloomy dignity the while; when he was but a very short distance away, he said:

"Well, Monsieur le Maréchal, have you any news?"

"Yes, Sire," replied the new comer sadly.

"What is it?"

"It is of such a nature that I could wish that any other than myself were called upon to make it known to your Majesty."

"So the Emperor refuses my services? he forgets the victories of Aboukir, and Eylau, and Moscow!"

"No, Sire; but he remembers the treaty of Naples, the capture of Reggio, and the declaration of war on the Viceroy of Italy."

The beggar struck his forehead.

"Yes, yes," he exclaimed, "perhaps, from his point of view, I do deserve these reproaches; but it seems to me, nevertheless, that he ought to remember that there are two men in me—the soldier whom he made his brother, and his brother whom he made a king. Yes, as his brother, I was in the wrong, very much in the wrong, in the way I used him; but as king, upon my soul! I could do no otherwise. I was obliged to choose between my sword and my crown, between a regiment and a whole people! Look you, Brune, you do not know how the thing came about. There was an English fleet whose guns were roaring in the harbor; there was a Neapolitan populace howling through the streets. Had I been alone I would have passed through the fleet in a wherry, and cut my way through the mob with my sword; but I had a wife and children. And yet I hesitated, for the thought that the epithets of 'traitor' and 'deserter' would be coupled with my name made me shed more tears than the mere loss of my throne will ever cost me, or even the death of the beings whom I love most dearly. However, he will have none of me, you mean me to understand, do you not? As general, as captain, or as common soldier, he has no use for me? What is there left for me to do, in God's name?"

"Sire, your Majesty must leave France at once."

"Suppose I do not obey."

"My orders are, in that case, to arrest you and send you before a council of war!"

"Which you would not do, would you, my old comrade?"

"Which I would do, praying God to strike me dead the moment I put out my hand to take you."

"That is like you, Brune; always loyal and true! He gave you no kingdom; he did not place upon your

brow that circlet of fire which is called a crown, and which drives men mad; he did not place you between your conscience and your family. I am forced, then, to leave France, to begin anew my wandering life, to say farewell to Toulon, which recalls so many memories of the past! Look, Brune," Murat continued, taking the marshal's arm, "are not those pines yonder as fine as those of the Villa Pamphili, the palms equal to those of Cairo, and might one not mistake these mountains behind us for a part of the Tyrol? See the Cap de Gien here at the left; is it not something like Castellamare and Sorrento, minus Vesuvius? And does not Saint Mandrier, which closes the bay over there, somewhat resemble my rock of Capri, which Lamarque so cleverly pilfered from that idiot Hudson Lowe? And I must needs leave all this! *Mon Dieu!* is there no way of allowing me to remain upon this little corner of French territory, Brune, tell me?"

"Sire, you pain me exceedingly," replied the marshal.

"Very well, we will say no more about it. What is the news?"

"The Emperor has left Paris, to join the army; they should be fighting by this time—"

"They should be fighting at this time, and I not there! Ah! I am sure that I might still have been of considerable use to him on a day of battle! With what delight I would have led the charge upon those wretched Prussians and the rascally English! Brune, give me a passport; I will be off at the top of my speed, I will find the army wherever it may be, and I will go to some colonel and say to him: 'Let me take your regiment;' I will charge at its head, and if the Emperor doesn't shake hands with me that evening, I give you my word of honor that I will blow my brains out. Do what I ask,

Brune, and however it may turn out, I will be grateful to you forever!"

"I cannot, Sire."

"So be it; let us say no more about it."

"And your Majesty will leave France?"

"I do not know; however, carry out your orders, Marshal, and if you find me again, arrest me; that will be another way of conferring a favor upon me. Life is a heavy burden to me to-day, and anyone who will deliver me from it will be welcome. Adieu, Brune."

He held out his hand to the marshal, who was stooping to kiss it, when Murat opened his arms, and the two old companions-in-arms embraced each other for a moment, with streaming eyes. At last they parted; Brune remounted his horse, Murat picked up his staff, and each went his way, the one to be assassinated at Avignon, and the other to suffer military execution at Pizzo.

Meanwhile, Napoleon, like Richard III. at Bosworth, was exchanging his kingdom for a horse at Waterloo.

After the interview we have described the ex-king of Naples sought shelter at the house of his nephew, one Bonafoux, a commander in the navy; but it could be nothing more than a mere temporary retreat, for the relationship was sure to arouse the suspicions of the authorities sooner or later. For that reason Bonafoux sought to find a place where his presence might be better concealed. He thought of one of his friends who was a lawyer, whose probity was beyond suspicion, and called upon him the same evening. After talking for some time upon indifferent subjects, he asked his friend if he had not a country house on the seashore, and upon receiving an affirmative reply, invited himself to breakfast there with him the next day—a suggestion which was accepted with much pleasure.

The next morning at the hour appointed Bonafoux made his appearance at Bonette, as the country house was called, where M. Marouin's wife and daughter were passing the summer. The advocate himself, on account of his large practice at the Toulon bar, was obliged to make his home in the city.

After the ordinary greetings had been exchanged, Bonafoux walked to the window and motioned to Marouin to follow him.

"I thought your place was nearer the water than this," he said somewhat ill at ease.

"We are hardly ten minutes' walk from it."

"But I can't see it."

"Simply because that hill shuts it off."

"Suppose we walk down to the shore while we are waiting for breakfast?"

"Gladly; your horse is not unsaddled yet, I will have mine saddled, and join you in a moment."

Marouin left Bonafoux standing at the window, deep in thought; but as his hostesses were busied with the preparations for breakfast, they did not notice or seemed not to notice his preoccupation. In five minutes Marouin returned to say that the horses were ready, and he and his guest mounted and rode down towards the shore.

When they reached the beach, the captain slackened the pace of his steed, and rode up and down for half an hour or more, apparently observing the lay of the land with the greatest care. Marouin followed him without asking any questions as to his scrutiny, in which there was nothing strange, as he was a naval officer.

At last the friends returned to the house after an absence of an hour. Marouin ordered the saddles taken off, but Bonafoux said no; that he was obliged to return to Toulon immediately after breakfast. Indeed, the

coffee was no sooner taken away than he rose and took leave of his hostess. Marouin, whose business called him back to the city, mounted his horse once more, and they rode back towards Toulon together.

They had been riding along silently for some ten minutes when Bonafoux drew closer to his companion and laid his hand upon his arm.

"Marouin," said he, "I have something very serious to say to you, a weighty secret to confide to you."

"What is it, Captain? Next to a confessor, you know, there is nobody so discreet as a notary, and next to the notary comes the advocate."

"You must have seen that I did not come down to your country place for no other purpose than to enjoy the ride. I had a much more important object, for there is a serious responsibility upon me, and I have selected you from among all my friends, in the belief that you are sufficiently fond of me to be willing to do me a very great service."

"You have done well, Captain."

"Let us come to the point at once, as befits men who esteem and trust each other. My uncle, King Joachim, is proscribed; he is in hiding at my house, but he cannot remain there, for it is the very first place they will select, in which to search for him. Your country house stands by itself, and for that reason there could be no more convenient retreat for him. You must place it at our disposal until circumstances permit the king to make up his mind to one thing or another."

"You may dispose of it as you will," said Marouin.

"Good; my uncle will sleep there to-night."

"But pray give me time to put it in suitable condition for the royal guest I am to have the honor of entertaining."

"My dear Marouin, you would be putting yourself out to no purpose, and necessitating delay that would be most dangerous to us. King Joachim is altogether out of touch with palaces and courtiers; he is only too happy when he can be sure of a cottage and a friend. Besides, I told him to be ready, I was so sure beforehand of your reply; he expects to sleep at your house to-night, and if I should try now to make any change in his plans, he would construe a simple postponement to mean a refusal, and you would lose all the credit of your kind and noble act. So it's all settled; at ten o'clock this evening, at the Champ de Mars."

With these words the captain put spurs to his horse and disappeared. Marouin turned about and rode back to Bonette to give the necessary orders for the reception of a stranger whose name he did not know.

At ten o'clock in the evening, as agreed, Marouin was at the Champ de Mars, which was then covered with Marshal Brune's field artillery. No one was there to meet him, and he wandered around among the ammunition wagons until a sentry came up to him and asked him what he was doing there. It was by no means an easy question to answer, for one hardly rides for pleasure in the midst of a park of artillery at ten o'clock at night; so he asked to speak to the officer in command of the post. The officer came out, and Marouin introduced himself as an advocate and assistant to the mayor of Toulon; he told him that he had made an appointment with somebody at the Champ de Mars, not knowing that it was contrary to rule, and that he was now waiting for that person. The officer was content with his explanation, gave him leave to remain, and returned to the guard-house. The sentry, relieved of responsibility, continued his measured walk, without

troubling himself any further concerning the presence of a stranger.

A few moments later, a group of several persons appeared near the lists. It was a superb night, and the moon was shining brightly. Marouin recognized Bonafoux and went forward to meet him. The captain took his hand and led him up to the king, to whom he said:

"Sire, this is the friend of whom I spoke to you."

Then he turned to Marouin:

"To you," said he, "I entrust the King of Naples, proscribed and a fugitive. I say nothing of the possibility that he may some day wear his crown again, for that would be to deprive what you are doing of all its merit. Do you now ride on with him and show him the road; we will follow at a distance. Forward!"

The king and the advocate at once rode away. Murat was clad in a blue redingote, half military, half civil, buttoned close to his chin; he wore white trousers and high boots with spurs. His hair was long, and he had long moustaches, and thick side-whiskers, which met under his chin. All the way he questioned his host closely as to the situation of his estate, and the means of reaching the shore quickly in case of alarm.

About midnight the king and Marouin arrived at Bonette; the king's suite, composed of some thirty persons, joined them there within ten minutes. After partaking of refreshments, this little party, the last relic of the fallen king's court, withdrew to find shelter in the town and its neighborhood, and Murat was left alone with the ladies, keeping with him a single *valet de chambre* named Leblanc.

About a month Murat remained in this retreat, spending all his time in replying to the newspapers which accused him of treason to the Emperor. This accusation

was his constant thought, the spectre that haunted his dreams; day and night he sought to refute it by thinking out every possible reason for acting as he had done, consequent upon the difficult position in which he was placed.

Meanwhile, news of the disastrous defeat of Waterloo had become generally known. The Emperor, who had formerly proscribed others, was himself proscribed, and was awaiting at Rochefort, like Murat at Toulon, the decision of his enemies in regard to him.

No one has ever known what mysterious motive impelled Napoleon to reject the advice of General Lallemand and the devotion of Captain Baudin, and, preferring England to America, to choose to lie bound, a modern Prometheus, on the cliffs of St. Helena. It is our purpose to tell of the combination of circumstances which led Murat into the trenches of Pizzo; and we will leave the fatalists to draw from the strange story such philosophic deduction as it may please them to draw. For our own part, we claim to be nothing more than a mere annalist, and can only vouch for the accuracy of the facts which we have already set down, and of those which follow.

King Louis XVIII. had ascended the throne, so that Murat's last hope of remaining in France was lost; he had no choice but to depart. His nephew Bonafoux chartered a brig for the United States in the name of the Prince de Rocca-Romana. The suite were taken aboard and some of the treasures which the proscribed monarch had managed to save out of the shipwreck of his royalty, a bag of gold weighing about a hundred livres, a sword hilt, upon which were the portraits of the king and queen and their children, and the deeds and muniments of his family, bound in velvet and ornamented with his

arms. Murat wore about his waist a belt containing some few valuable papers, and a score of uncut diamonds, which he valued at four millions.

All these preliminaries being at last completed, it was agreed that the brig's cutter should come ashore on the following day, the 1st August, at five in the morning, and pick up the king in a small bay about ten minutes' walk from the country house at which he was staying. The king passed the night marking out a route by which M. Marouin could best reach the queen, who was, I think, in Austria. It was done just as the moment to start arrived, and as he crossed the threshold of the hospitable roof beneath which he had found shelter, he handed his host a volume of Voltaire, of a stereotyped edition which could be conveniently carried. At the end of the tale of *Micromégas* the king had written:

"Let your mind be at ease, my dear Caroline; although I am wretchedly unhappy, I am free. I am going away without knowing where I may go, but wherever I may be, my heart will still be with you and my children."

"J. M."

Ten minutes later Murat and his host were upon the beach of Bonette awaiting the coming of the boat which was to put the fugitive aboard his vessel.

They waited thus till midday, and nothing appeared, although they could see the brig in the offing; unable to anchor on account of the great depth of water, she was standing off and on, at the risk of arousing the suspicions of the sentinels on shore. At midday the king, worn out by the suspense, and suffering intensely from the heat, had lain down upon the beach, when a servant arrived with some lunch which Madame Marouin, anxious at her husband's failure to return home, had

taken the risk of sending. The king drank a glass of wine and water, and ate an orange; then he stood up for a moment to see if he could not make out the boat he was expecting, somewhere on the vast expanse; but the sea was deserted, except for the brig, which rose and fell gracefully on the horizon, impatient to be off, like a horse waiting for his rider.

The king heaved a sigh, and lay down again upon the sand, while the servant returned to Bonette with instructions to send M. Marouin's brother to them. He came within a quarter of an hour, and at once rode off at full speed to Toulon, to find out whether M. Bonafoux knew what had prevented the boat from coming ashore for the king.

When he reached the captain's house he found it in possession of an armed force, making a domiciliary visit in search of Murat. The messenger succeeded at last in making his way amid the tumult to the master of the house, and learned from him that the boat had started at the time agreed upon, and that she must have gone astray in some of the innumerable bays between Saint-Louis and Sainte-Marguerite. As a matter of fact that was just what had happened.

At five o'clock M. Marouin returned to the king and his brother with this information, which was embarrassing to say the least. The king had not enough courage left to defend his own life even by flight; he was in one of those periods of utter prostration which sometimes overcome the strongest men, incapable of forming any plan to assure his own safety and leaving M. Marouin at liberty to take such measures as he thought proper.

At this moment a fisherman came surging into the harbor, and Marouin signaled to him to come to them, which he did. First of all, Marouin bought his whole

catch of fish and paid him with some silver coins; then he let him see the glitter of gold pieces and offered him three louis to put a passenger aboard the brig, which was then off the Croix-des-Signaux. The fisherman accepted. This chance of deliverance at once restored all Murat's faculties; he jumped to his feet, embraced M. Marouin, with a final injunction to go to his wife and hand her the volume of Voltaire; then he leaped into the boat, which at once pushed off.

They were some little distance from the shore when the king told the rower to pull back, and signed to Marouin that he had forgotten something; he had left upon the sand a traveling-bag containing a superb pair of pistols, silver mounted, which the queen gave him, and which he valued very highly. As soon as he was within earshot, he shouted out to his host his reason for returning, and Marouin at once picked up the valise and threw it from the beach into the boat, before she touched. As it fell, the valise opened, and one of the pistols dropped out; the fisherman cast but a single glance at the weapon, but that was quite enough for him to remark its magnificence and to entertain suspicions. Nevertheless he kept on rowing toward the brig; M. Marouin, seeing that he was really off at last, left his brother at the shore, and, with a final wave of the hand to the king, which was returned by him, went home to allay his wife's anxiety and take a few hours' rest, which he greatly needed.

Some two hours later he was aroused by a domiciliary visit; his turn had come, and his house was overrun by gendarmes. They hunted high and low without finding any trace of the king. Just as they were pushing their investigations most vigorously, his brother came in; Marouin met him with a smile, for he supposed that the

king was safe; but he soon saw from the expression of his brother's face, that some new obstacle had arisen; so he went up to him as soon as his visitors left him to himself for a moment.

"Well," he said, "the king is on board, I trust?"

"The king is hidden among the ruins not fifty steps from here."

"Why did he come back?"

"The fisherman pleaded bad weather and refused to put him aboard the brig."

"The villain!"

The gendarmes returned to the room at this point, and the whole night was spent in vain searching in the house and its dependencies. Several times the searchers passed within a few feet of Murat, so that he could hear their threats and curses. They went away at last, half an hour before dawn. Marouin waited until they were well away from the house, then hurried to the spot where the king was. He found him lying in a corner with a pistol in each hand; the poor fellow could not hold out against his extreme weariness, and had dropped off to sleep. Marouin hesitated a moment about bringing him back to his harassed, wandering life; but there was not a moment to lose, so he woke him.

They hastened at once to the shore; the morning mist was spread over the sea, so that they could see nothing two hundred feet away, and they were obliged to wait. At last the first rays of the sun began to suck up the vapor of the night, and to tear it asunder into fragments which blew hither and thither over the surface of the water as the clouds blow across the sky. The king's eyes plunged eagerly into each of the valleys which opened before them, but could distinguish nothing; he kept on hoping, however, that sooner or later he would

descry the brig of his salvation behind the shifting curtain. Little by little the horizon became clear; light puffs of vapor, like smoke, continued for some little time to chase each other over the water, and in each of them the king thought he recognized the white sails of his vessel. Finally the last vestige of mist disappeared, and the sea lay before them in all its immensity; not a sail was in sight. The brig, not daring to wait any longer, had sailed away during the night.

"Let us go," said Murat, turning to his host, "the die is cast; I will go to Corsica."

The same day, Marshal Brune was assassinated at Avignon.

Murat lay hidden at M. Marouin's until the 22d August. It was no longer Napoleon by whom he was threatened, it was Louis XVIII. who now proscribed him; nor did the loyal and gallant soldier, Brune, come again with tears in his eyes, to communicate the orders he had received, but a price* was put upon his head by the malevolent and ungrateful M. de Rivières, whose own life he had saved.† It is true that M. de Rivières did write to the ex-king of Naples, advising him to trust to the good faith and humanity of the king of France, but this vague invitation did not seem to the proscribed monarch a sufficient guaranty, especially from a man who had just permitted a marshal of France, bearing a safe conduct signed by his own hand, to be foully murdered almost under his eyes. Murat knew of the massacre of the Mamelukes at Marseilles, and of the murder of Brune at Avignon; he had been notified the

*Forty-eight thousand francs.

†The Marquis de Rivières was involved in what was known as the Conspiracy of Pichegru (1805), and was condemned to death with Cadoudal and others. Napoleon spared his life at the intercession of Murat and Caroline.

day before by the police commissioner of Toulon that a formal order for his arrest had been issued, so that he could no longer dream of remaining in France. Corsica, with its hospitable towns, its friendly mountains, and its impenetrable forests, was barely fifty leagues away; so to Corsica he would go, and await there, in town, or mountains, or forests, the decision of the allied kings as to the fate of him whom for seven years they had called their brother.

At ten o'clock at night the king went down to the beach as before. The boat which was to take him up was not yet at the rendezvous, but there was no fear this time that she would fail to appear, for the position of the little bay had been carefully noted during the day by three devoted friends of the unfortunate king, MM. Blancard, Langlade and Donadieu, naval officers all, and men of intellect and courage, who had promised upon their lives to take Murat to Corsica, and who, as it turned out, did actually put their lives at stake to fulfil their promise. It caused Murat no anxiety therefore to find the beach deserted; on the contrary the delay gave him a few moments of something like filial joy. By this tongue of sand the wretched fugitive still clung to France, his mother, while the placing of his foot aboard the vessel that was to bear him away from her would mark the beginning of a long, if not an eternal separation.

He was lost in such thoughts as these, when he suddenly started and sighed heavily at sight of a sail gliding over the waves like a phantom in the half-darkness of the southern night. Soon he heard a bar of a sailor's song, and as this was the appointed signal, he replied by burning the priming of a pistol. The vessel at once turned her head toward the land, but as she

drew three feet of water, she was obliged to come to, ten or twelve paces from the beach. Two men leaped into the water and waded ashore, the third remained at the tiller, wrapped in his cloak.

"Well! my gallant friends," said Murat, hurrying forward to meet Blancard and Langlade until he felt the water coming through his shoes, "the time has come, has it not? The wind is fair and the sea smooth; we must be off."

"Yes," replied Langlade, "yes, Sire, we must be off; and yet perhaps it would be wiser to postpone it till to-morrow."

"Why so?" the king asked.

Langlade made no reply, but turned to the west and raised his hand, and began to whistle for the wind, as sailors do.

"That is useless," interposed Donadieu, who had remained in the boat, "here come the first puffs now, and you will soon have more than you know what to do with. Take care, Langlade, take care; sometimes in calling the wind one awakes the tempest."

Murat started; it seemed to him for a moment as if that counsel, coming as it did from the sea, was spoken by the spirit of the deep; but the fancy lasted only a second, and he recovered himself at once.

"So much the better," he said, "the more wind we have, the faster we shall sail."

"True," rejoined Langlade, "but God knows where it will take us, if it keeps on shifting this way."

"Do not start to-night, Sire," said Blancard, adding the weight of his opinion to that of his comrades.

"But why not, pray tell me?"

"Because, you see that black line, do you not? Well at sunset, it was hardly visible, and now it obscures a

good bit of the horizon; in another hour there will not be a star in the sky."

"Are you afraid?" Murat asked.

"Afraid?" Langlade repeated, "afraid of what? of a storm?" He shrugged his shoulders. "That's about as if I were to ask your Majesty if you were afraid of a cannon-ball. No, what we say is said on your account, Sire; what harm do you suppose a storm can do old sea-dogs like us?"

"Let us go, then!" cried Murat with a sigh. "Adieu, Marouin, God alone can repay what you have done for me. I am at your service, Messieurs."

As he ceased speaking, the officers seized him on either side, raised him on their shoulders and walked into the water; in an instant he was aboard the boat. Langlade and Blancard climbed in behind him. Donadieu remained at the helm, while the others took charge of the working of the vessel, and began by making sail on her. Like a horse which feels the spur, the little craft seemed to come to life; the sailors glanced heedlessly toward the shore, and Murat, feeling that he was indeed turning his back upon his country, cried out for the last time:

"You have your route all mapped out to Trieste;—do not forget my wife! Adieu! Adieu!"

"God keep you, Sire!" murmured Marouin. For some little time the white sail which stood out clearly in the darkness made it possible for him to follow the vessel with his eyes as she glided swiftly away; at last she disappeared. Marouin still lingered on the shore, although he could no longer see anything, nor did he hear aught else save a shout which barely reached his ears, so great was the distance; that shout was Murat's last farewell to France.

One evening, on the very spot where these things took

place, M. Marouin told me all the details which I have set down here; and the whole transaction came back to his mind so vividly, although twenty years had intervened, that he remembered the most trivial accidents of that nocturnal embarkation. He assured me that a presentiment of impending disaster seized him the moment the boat left the land, that he could not tear himself away from the beach, and that he was several times on the point of calling the king back; but his mouth opened without emitting any sound, as frequently happens to one in dreams, for he feared that they might think him mad. Not till one in the morning, two hours and a half after the king's departure, did he return home with a mortal sadness at his heart.

Meanwhile the adventurous mariners had taken the regular beaten track of vessels sailing from Toulon to Bastia, and at first it seemed as if their predictions would be falsified by the event; the wind, instead of increasing, died gradually away, and two hours after leaving the beach the boat was rocking up and down without any headway, and the waves were rapidly decreasing in size. Murat gazed gloomily at the phosphorescent gleam in the wake of the little vessel, stretching back over the sea; it seemed to him as if they were held to the spot by invisible chains. He had summoned up a store of courage to meet a tempest, but was not prepared to face a dead calm; and without so much as questioning his companions, whose anxiety he entirely misunderstood, he lay down in the bottom of the boat wrapped in his cloak, and closing his eyes as if he were asleep, abandoned himself to the waves of thought which swept through his brain, much more tumultuous and agitated than the waves of the sea. In a short time the two officers, supposing him to be asleep, went aft

and sat down by the man at the helm, and began to take counsel together.

"You were wrong, Langlade," said Donadieu, "not to get a larger boat or else a smaller one; with no deck we are not prepared for a blow, and with no oars we can't get ahead in a calm."

"*Pardieu!* I had no choice. I had to take what I could get, and if it had not happened to be just the time for the Spanish mackerel fishing I should not have found even this wretched tub, unless I had gone into the harbor in search of something, and such a close watch is kept now, that although I could have gone in all right, I should probably have been unable to come out again."

"Well, at all events, she's tight, isn't she?" said Blancard.

"*Pardieu!* you know well enough what to expect of planks and nails that have been soaking in the salt water for ten years. Under ordinary circumstances one would rather not take her to go from Marseilles to Chateau d'If, while, situated as we are, a cockleshell would serve to go around the world in."

"Hush!" said Donadieu. The others listened, and could hear a distant rumbling so faint that none but the practiced ear of a son of the sea could make it out.

"Aha!" exclaimed Langlade; "there's a warning for those who have legs or wings to get back to the nest which they ought not to have left."

"Are we far from the islands?" said Donadieu sharply.

"About a league."

"Steer for them."

"What for, pray?" demanded Murat, rising.

"To drop an anchor, Sire, if we can."

"No, no!" cried Murat. "I will not step foot on shore except at Corsica; I do not choose to say farewell to

France again. Besides the sea is smooth and the wind is freshening—"

"Down with everything!" shouted Donadieu.

Langlade and Blancard rushed forward to carry out the order; the sail came down with a run, and lay in a heap at the foot of the mast.

"What are you doing?" cried Murat; "do you forget that I am king and that it is for me to command?"

"Sire," said Donadieu, "there is a King more powerful than you—God; and there is a voice which drowns yours—the voice of the storm. Let us save your Majesty if possible, but ask nothing more—"

At this moment a bright flash lighted up the sky, followed by a peal of thunder much nearer than the first; light foam rose to the surface of the water, and the boat shivered like a thing of life. Murat began to realize that danger was at hand, and at once rose to his feet, threw off his hat with a smile, shook his long hair and breathed the coming storm as he used to breathe the smoke of battle; the soldier was ready for the fray.

"Sire," Donadieu said to him, "you have seen many battles, but perhaps you never saw a hurricane at sea; if you are curious to see what one is like, just cling to the mast and look, for there is a very pretty one coming."

"What must I do?" said Murat; "can't I help you in any way?"

"No, not at this moment, Sire; later we will make use of you at the pumps."

While they were talking, the storm had drawn steadily nearer, and now came down upon the voyagers like a race-horse, exhaling wind and fire through its nostrils, neighing in tones of thunder, and making the foam fly from the tops of the waves under its feet. Donadieu put his helm up, and the boat obeyed as if she understood

the necessity of prompt action, and presented her stern to the blow; the squall passed over, leaving the sea quivering behind it, and everything seemed to become quiet once more. The tempest was taking breath.

"Pray, are we quit of it for that little flurry?" Murat inquired.

"No, your Majesty," Donadieu replied; "that was only a skirmish with the advance guard; the main body of the army will be upon us in a moment."

"Are we to make no preparations to receive it?" the king asked gayly.

"What for instance?" rejoined Donadieu; "we haven't a square inch of canvas where the wind can get at it, and so long as she takes no water, we shall float like a cork. Hold fast, Sire!"

The warning was needed, for a second squall struck them more suddenly than the first, and accompanied by rain and vivid lightning. Donadieu tried to repeat his former manœuvre, but she did not mind her helm quickly enough, and the wind struck her broadside; the mast bent like a reed, and the boat shipped a sea.

"To the pumps!" shouted Donadieu, "now is the time you can help us, Sire."

Blancard, Langlade and Murat seized their hats and began to bale out the water. The four men were in a terrible situation, and it lasted three hours. At daybreak the wind went down, but the sea continued high and boisterous. The pangs of hunger began to make themselves felt, but all their provisions were soaked with salt water, the wine alone being uninjured. The king took a bottle and drank two or three swallows, and then handed it to his companions, who followed his example; etiquette gave way to stress of circumstances. Langlade happened to have a few cakes of chocolate in his pocket,

and offered them to the king, who divided them into four equal parts, and forced his companions to eat. When this frugal repast was finished they put the boat's head to the eastward again, but she had suffered so that there was no probability that they would succeed in reaching Bastia.

They made less than ten leagues in the whole day; they had no sail on their little craft except the jib, as they dared not hoist the mainsail, and the wind was so baffling that they spent most of the time trimming the sail to humor its whims. Towards evening they discovered that she was leaking, where two planks had sprung apart; they succeeded in stopping the inflow of water by stuffing all of their handkerchiefs into the crack, just as night came upon them and wrapped them a second time in darkness. Murat, quite prostrated by fatigue, fell asleep; Blancard and Langlade resumed their places beside Donadieu, and these three men, apparently insensible to drowsiness and weariness, watched over the king's safety while he slept.

The night was perfectly calm so far as the weather was concerned, but every now and then there was a dull, cracking sound which made the three officers look significantly at each other, and then turn their eyes upon the king, who was sleeping in the bottom of the boat, wrapped in his drenched cloak, as soundly as he had slept on the sands of Egypt and amid the snows of Russia. One of them rose and went forward, whistling between his teeth the air of a Provençal ballad; after consulting the sky and the waves he returned and sat down again by his companions, muttering:

"It's impossible; we shall never arrive there unless a miracle happens."

The night passed thus in alternations of hope and dread. At daybreak, there was a sail in sight.

"Sail ho!" shouted Donadieu. "Sail ho!" and the king awoke.

It was a small trading brig, coming from Corsica, and making for Toulon. Donadieu steered towards her, Blancard hoisted the sail till he endangered the safety of the boat, and Langlade ran to the bow and waved the king's cloak at the end of a sort of harpoon. They soon saw that they were sighted, the brig ran down towards them, and in ten minutes they were within fifty yards of each other. The captain appeared on the bow, and the king hailed him, offering him a handsome sum if he would take him and his three companions aboard and carry them to Corsica. The captain heard what he had to say, then turned to his crew and gave an order in an undertone, which Donadieu could not hear, but which he probably grasped the meaning of from the gesture which accompanied it, for he at once issued orders to Blancard and Langlade, the effect of which was to run away from the brig. They obeyed with the unquestioning alacrity of sailors; but the king stamped his foot impatiently.

"What are you about, Donadieu? what are you about?" he cried; "don't you see that she is coming down to us?"

"Yes, upon my soul, I see it! Quick there, Langlade, quick, Blancard! Yes, she is coming down to us, and perhaps I discovered it too late. That's good; steady and leave her to me now."

He threw his whole weight on the tiller, with such a sudden, violent shock, that the boat seemed to hold herself stiff against the enforced change of direction, as a horse might do against the curb, but at last she obeyed.

A huge wave, raised by the larger vessel, bore her off to one side like a leaf, and the brig passed within a few feet of her stern.

"Ah! traitor!" cried the king, as the captain's purpose began at last to dawn upon him; and he drew a pistol from his belt, shouting: "Lay her aboard! lay her aboard!" He attempted to discharge his pistol at the brig, but the powder was wet and did not explode. The king was mad with rage, and continued to shriek: "Lay her aboard! lay her aboard!"

"Ah! yes, the villain, or rather the idiot," said Donadieu; "he took us for pirates and tried to sink us, as if we needed him for that!"

Indeed, it was easy to see that the boat was beginning to take in water through several cracks which had been opened by the strain consequent upon Donadieu's desperate expedient to avoid being run down. They had to set about baling her out with their hats again, and had no respite for ten hours. At last Donadieu, for the second time, uttered the cheerful cry of "Sail ho!"

The king and his companions immediately ceased their labors; they hoisted the sails once more, and headed for the approaching vessel, paying no farther attention to the water, which gained rapidly upon them, having no obstacle to its progress.

Thenceforth it was simply a question of time, of minutes, or seconds; their only hope was to reach the vessel before they went down. She, too, seemed to realize the desperate plight of those who were imploring her assistance; and she came on like a race-horse. Langlade was the first to make her out as a government felucca, employed in carrying the mails between Toulon and Bastia. The captain was a friend of his, and he called him by his name in a voice to which desperation

lent added volume. His call was heard, and it was full time, for the boat was groaning like a dying man in the death agony; she had ceased to move forward, and was beginning to turn round and round as if on a pivot. Two or three ropes were thrown from the felucca into the boat; the king seized one, clambered up the rope ladder and was safe. Blancard and Langlade were but a moment behind him; Donadieu, who was the last to leave, had just put one foot on the ladder, when he felt the boat he was leaving sinking beneath the other. He turned to look back with a sailor's *sang-froid*, and saw the yawning gulf open its jaws, and the boat plunge in and disappear. Five seconds more, and the four men who stood safe on the felucca's deck had been lost forever!*

Murat had no sooner put his foot on board the felucca than a man stepped forward and threw himself at his feet. It was a Mameluke whom he brought with him from Egypt long before, and who had since married at Castellamare. Business matters had led him to Marseilles, where he escaped, by a miracle, in the general massacre of his compatriots. He recognized his former master, in spite of his disguise and of the hardships he had undergone. His joyous exclamations made it impossible for the king to maintain his incognito; thereupon Senator Casabianca, Captain Oletta, a nephew of Prince Baciocchi, and an ordnance-officer named Boerco, who were themselves flying from the massacres in the south, and happened to be aboard the felucca, saluted him with the title of "Majesty," and improvised a little court about him. The transition was sudden but

* These details are very generally known at Toulon, and were told to me personally at least twenty times during my two visits to that city in 1834 and 1835. Some of those with whom I talked had them from the lips of Langlade and Donadieu themselves.

complete; he was no longer Murat, the outlaw, but Joachim I., King of Naples. All thoughts of a place of exile vanished with the sunken boat; Naples and its glorious bay appeared on the horizon of his dreams, like a startlingly vivid mirage, and the fatal Calabrian expedition was first thought of, unquestionably, during those days of elation which followed the hours of agony.

Meanwhile the king, in doubt as to the reception which awaited him in Corsica, assumed the name of Count of Campo Mello, and landed at Bastia under that name on the 25th August.

But it was a fruitless precaution, for within three days of his landing there was no one in the town who did not know of his presence there.

Meetings were at once organized, and cries of "Vive Joachim!" were raised in the streets; and the king, fearing that the public tranquillity might be disturbed, left the town the third evening, with his three companions and the Mameluke. In two hours he was at Viscovato, ringing at the door of General Franchescetti, who was in his service throughout his reign; he left Naples when the king did, and returned to Corsica, where he and his wife were living in the house of M. Colona Cicaldi, his father-in-law. He was at supper, when he was informed that a stranger wished to speak with him; he went to the door and found a man wrapped in a military cloak, with a sailor's cap on his head, a soldier's trousers, gaiters, and shoes, and a long, shaggy beard. The general stared at him in amazement; Murat fixed his great black eyes upon him, and said, folding his arms:

"Franchescetti, have you a seat at your table for your general, who is starving? have you shelter beneath your roof for your king, who is an outlaw?"

Franchescetti exclaimed in surprise when he recognized Joachim, and could find no reply except to fall at his feet and kiss his hand. From that moment, the general's house was Murat's to do as he pleased with.

As soon as the news of the king's presence was circulated through the neighborhood, officers of all ranks hurried to Viscovato, veterans who had fought under him, and Corsican hunters, attracted by his adventurous character. In a few days the general's house was transformed into a palace, the village became a royal burgh, and the island a kingdom. Strange stories were current as to Murat's intentions, and an army of nine hundred men helped to give them consistence.

At this time Blancard, Langlade and Donadieu took their leave of Murat; he tried to induce them to remain, but they had enlisted to secure the safety of the outlaw, and not to bolster up the cause of the king.

We have said that Murat encountered, on the Bastia mail-boat, one of his old Mamelukes, named Othello, who followed him to Viscovato. The king determined to employ him as an agent, and as his family connections naturally called him to Castellamare he ordered him to go to that place and entrusted him with letters for the persons on whom he placed the most reliance. Othello arrived safely at his father-in-law's house, and thought he could venture to tell him the whole story; but the father-in-law was alarmed and notified the police, who paid Othello a visit by night, and seized all his papers.

The next morning all those persons to whom the letters were addressed were arrested, and ordered to reply to Murat as if they were free, and to mention Salerno as the most suitable place for landing. Five out of the seven were cowardly enough to obey; the other two, who

were Spaniards and brothers, absolutely refused, and were cast into prison.

Meanwhile Murat left Viscovato on the 17th September, escorted by General Franchescetti and several Corsican officers; he moved towards Ajaccio by Cotona, the mountains of Serra, Bosco, Venaco and Vivaro, and the forest passes of Vezzanovo and Bogognona. Everywhere he was received as a king, and at the entrance to every town he was welcomed by deputations with addresses in which he was invariably given the title of Majesty. He finally reached Ajaccio on the 23d September. The entire population was awaiting his arrival outside the walls, and his entrance into the town was a veritable triumph. He was carried to the inn which had been selected in advance by his orderlies, and was welcomed in a fashion that might well have turned the head of a less impressionable man than Murat. As for him, he was fairly wild; as he entered the inn he held out his hand to Franchescetti.

"You can see," he said, "from the way the Corsicans receive me, what the Neapolitans will do for me."

These were the first words which had escaped him giving a hint of his plans for the future, but that very day he ordered everything to be made ready for his departure. They got together ten little feluccas, and a Maltese named Barbara, formerly a commander in the Neapolitan navy, was appointed commander-in-chief of the expedition. Two hundred and fifty men were enlisted and directed to hold themselves in readiness to set out at the first signal. Murat waited for nothing more except the replies to the letters he gave Othello, and they arrived on the morning of the 28th. Murat invited all the officers to a grand dinner party, and ordered double pay and double rations to be given the men.

The king was at dessert when the arrival of M. Maceroni was announced; he was a messenger from the foreign powers, and he brought to Murat the reply he had waited for so long at Toulon. He rose from the table and went into an adjoining room; M. Maceroni announced that he was entrusted with an official mission, and handed Murat the ultimatum of the Emperor of Austria. It was in these terms:

"M. Maceroni is hereby authorized to inform King Joachim that his Majesty, the Emperor of Austria, will allow him to reside in his dominions, on the following terms:

"1. The king to assume a private name; the queen having taken the name of Lipano, it is suggested that he take the same.

"2. The king may select any city in Bohemia, Moravia or Upper Austria, in which to live; or there will be no objection to his occupying an estate in the country in either of those provinces.

"3. The king will pledge his word of honor to his royal and imperial Majesty that he will not leave the Austrian dominions without the emperor's express consent, and that he will live like any private individual of distinguished merit, in due submission to such laws as are in force in the empire.

"In witness whereof and to the end that all proper form may be observed, the undersigned has received the emperor's command to set his hand to this declaration.

"Given at Paris, the 14th September, 1815.

"Signed—PRINCE DE METTERNICH."

Murat smiled as he finished reading the letter, and motioned to M. Maceroni to follow him. He led him out upon the terrace, which commanded a view of the

whole town, and was itself dominated by his banner, which floated above it as if it were a royal castle. From that elevation they could see Ajaccio all decorated and illuminated, the streets crowded with people as on a fete-day, and the harbor, where the little fleet was riding at anchor. The crowd no sooner caught sight of Murat than a tremendous shout arose from every throat.

"Vive Joachim! Long live Napoleon's brother! Long live the King of Naples!"

Murat bowed and the shouts redoubled, while the band of the garrison struck up the national airs. M. Maceroni did not know if he ought to believe his eyes and his ears. When the king had enjoyed his amazement to his heart's content, he asked him to go down to the salon, where his staff were assembled in full uniform. One would have thought he was at Caserta or Capodimonte. At last, after a moment's hesitation, Maceroni drew near to Murat.

"Sire," said he, "what answer shall I take to his Majesty the Emperor of Austria?"

"Monsieur," Murat replied, with the lofty dignity which consorted so well with his handsome face, "tell my brother Francis what you have seen and heard; and you may add that I am setting out this very night to reconquer my kingdom of Naples."

The letters which had led Murat to decide to leave Corsica were brought to him by a Calabrian named Luidgi; he introduced himself to the king as a messenger from the Mameluke Othello, who had been cast into prison at Naples, as we have said, as had also the persons to whom the letters in his possession were addressed.

These letters, written by the Neapolitan minister of police, named the harbor of the town of Salerno as the

most convenient place to make his landing; for King Ferdinand had collected at that point three thousand Austrian troops, not daring to trust the Neapolitans, who retained very pleasant and vivid recollections of Murat.

So the flotilla steered for the Bay of Salerno, but just as they made the island of Capri, they encountered a violent storm and were driven out of their course to Paola, a small seaport about ten leagues from Cosenza. They passed the night of the 5th and 6th October in a sort of indentation in the shore, which did not deserve the name of roadstead. The king ordered all lights out, and that they should stand off and on until daylight, to avoid arousing the suspicions of the coastguards and Sicilian mail-boats; but about one o'clock in the morning the wind came on to blow so hard off shore that the whole fleet was driven out to sea again, and at daybreak on the sixth the king's vessel had parted company with all the others. During the morning Captain Cicconi's felucca joined her, and the two dropped anchor about four in the afternoon in sight of Santo-Lucido. In the evening the king ordered Colonel Ottaviani to go on shore and reconnoitre. Luidgi offered to accompany him, and Murat gladly accepted his offer. Ottaviani and his guide were thereupon set on shore, while Cicconi put to sea again to try and collect the rest of the fleet.

About eleven o'clock at night the officer of the watch on the king's felucca espied a man swimming off to the vessel; as soon as he was within earshot he hailed him, and the swimmer at once made himself known. It was Luidgi; the cutter was lowered, and he was picked up and carried aboard. He said that Colonel Ottaviani had been arrested, and that he had himself escaped only by taking to the water.

Murat's first impulse was to attempt the rescue of Ottaviani; but Luidgi convinced him that it would be both dangerous and useless. Nevertheless he remained in an excited and irresolute frame of mind until two o'clock. At last he gave orders to put to sea again, and while they were getting under way a sailor fell overboard, and disappeared before they had time even to try to save him. The omens were decidedly unfavorable.

On the morning of the seventh two vessels hove in sight. The king at once gave the word to make such preparations as they could for self-defense; but Barbara recognized them as the feluccas of Cicconi and Courraud, sailing in company. The proper signals were hoisted, and the two captains joined the admiral.

While they were deliberating as to the best course to pursue, a small boat approached the king's felucca, manned by Captain Pernice and a lieutenant; they came to ask the king's permission to join his vessel, as they were unwilling to remain with Courraud, who, in their opinion, was acting treacherously. Murat sent for him, and notwithstanding his protestations of devotion, he ordered him into a long-boat with fifty men, and directed that the long-boat should be made fast astern of his felucca. These orders were at once carried out, and the little squadron ran along the Calabrian shore, keeping it always in sight; but at ten o'clock at night, just as they were off the entrance to the bay of Saint-Euphemia, Captain Courraud cut the cable by which he was towing, and his men pulled vigorously away from the fleet. Murat had thrown himself upon his bed in his clothes, when he was informed of this occurrence. He rushed on deck just in time to see the long-boat swallowed up by the darkness in the direction of Corsica. He said nothing, gave no indication of excitement or anger; he simply

sighed, and let his head fall forward on his breast; another leaf had fallen from the enchanted tree of his hopes.

General Franchescetti profited by this period of depression to urge him not to land in Calabria at all, but to sail at once to Trieste and claim the protection which Austria had proffered him. The king was suffering from one of those attacks of extreme weariness and deathly dejection, which make the stoutest hearts grow weak; he resisted feebly at first, but ended by consenting. While they were talking the general noticed a sailor lying on a coil of rope within hearing distance of what they were saying; he checked himself and pointed the man out to Murat, who rose and went near to him and recognized Luidgi. He had apparently fallen asleep on the deck from sheer fatigue; his regular breathing reassured the king, and, more than that, his confidence in the man was absolute. Their interrupted conversation was renewed; it was agreed between them that, without divulging their newly formed plans to anybody, they would sail through the Straits of Messina and round Cape Spartivento into the Adriatic. Murat and Franchescetti then went below.

On the following day, October 8th, they were off Pizzo, when Joachim, in reply to a question from Barbara as to the course, ordered him to steer for Messina. Barbara replied that he was ready to obey, but was short of water and provisions; so he offered to go aboard Cicconi's felucca, and go ashore with her for supplies. The king assented, and Barbara thereupon asked for the passports which he had received from the allied powers, so that, as he said, he might be secure from annoyance by the local authorities. Those documents were too important for Murat to dream of giving them up; it may well be, too, that he began to be suspicious; so he refused.

Barbara insisted and Murat ordered him to go ashore without them, which he absolutely refused to do. The king, who was accustomed to be obeyed, drew his sword upon the Maltese; but suddenly he changed his plan, ordered the soldiers to put their weapons in condition, and the officers to don full uniform, himself setting the example; it was definitely decided to land, and Pizzo was destined to be the Gulf Juan of the new Napoleon.

The three vessels at once changed their course and headed for the shore. The king went over the side into a long-boat with twenty-eight soldiers and three servants, Luidgi among the number. As they approached the beach General Franchescetti made a movement as if to step ashore, but Murat stopped him.

"It is my place to go first," he said, and leaped out upon the sand.

He wore a general's uniform with white trousers and riding boots, a belt in which a brace of pistols were thrust, a hat trimmed with gold lace, the cockade being held in place by a loop containing fourteen diamonds. Under his arm he carried the banner, around which he expected that his partisans would rally.

As they landed the town clock at Pizzo was striking ten. Murat started at once for the village, which was hardly a hundred yards away; the path consisted of great blocks of stone so arranged as to form a stairway.

It was Sunday, and mass was just about to begin, so that the whole population of the village was assembled on the square when he arrived. No one recognized him and they were all gazing in wonder at the brilliant uniforms of the staff, when Murat espied among the peasants a former sergeant in his body-guard at Naples. He walked straight up to him, and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Tavella," said he, "don't you know me?"

As the peasant made no reply, he continued:

"I am Joachim Murat; I am your king; to you be the honor of being the first to cry 'Vive Joachim!'"

Murat's suite at once made the air ring with their acclamations; but the Calabrian said not a word, nor did a single one of his comrades repeat the rallying cry for which the king himself gave the signal; on the contrary, an ominous murmur ran through the crowd.

Murat well knew the meaning of the far-off rumbling of the tempest.

"Very well!" he said to Tavella, "if you refuse to shout 'Vive Joachim,' at least go and find a horse for me, and I will make you a captain instead of a sergeant."

Tavella walked away without replying, but instead of executing the order he had received, he returned to his own house, and did not appear again.

Meanwhile the crowd was still increasing in size, and not one friendly gesture or word gave Murat any promise of the sympathy he expected; he felt that he was lost unless he acted quickly and with resolution.

"To Monteleone!" he cried, leading the way toward the road which led to that town.

"To Monteleone!" his officers and men repeated as they rushed after him. And the crowd, still silent, opened to let them pass.

But they had hardly left the square before there began to be manifestations of intense agitation; a man named Giorgio Pellegrino rushed out of his house, armed with a musket, and passed through the square, crying: "To arms!" He knew that Captain Trenta Capelli, who commanded the gendarmes at Cosenza, was in Pizzo at that moment, and he hurried off to tell him of what had happened.

The call to arms awoke more of an echo in the mob than the other cry of "Vive Joachim!" had done. Every Calabrian has a gun, and every man of them ran to get it; and when Trenta Capelli and Pellegrino returned to the square they found well nigh five hundred armed men there. They put themselves at their head, and started off in pursuit of the king; they overtook him about ten minutes' ride from the square, at the place where the bridge now is. Murat stopped and waited for them when he saw them coming.

Trenta Capelli came forward, sword in hand.

"Monsieur," said the king, "do you care to exchange your captain's epaulettes for those of a general? Shout 'Vive Joachim!' and follow me with these brave fellows to Monteleone."

"Sire," rejoined Trenta Capelli, "we are all faithful subjects of King Ferdinand, and we are here to oppose, not to join you; give yourself up if you wish to avoid bloodshed."

Murat looked at him with an indescribable expression; then, without deigning to reply, he motioned to him with one hand to withdraw, while he put the other to the hilt of one of his pistols. Pellegrino saw the movement.

"Down, Captain!" he cried, "down on your face!"

The captain obeyed, and immediately a bullet whistled over his head and passed through Murat's hair.

"Fire!" shouted Franchescetti.

"Down with your arms!" cried Murat, and he took a step or two towards the peasants, waving his handkerchief above his head. But as he did so, there was a general discharge, and an officer and two or three men fell. Under such circumstances, when blood begins to flow, there is no stopping it. Murat was aware of that fatal fact, so he made up his mind swiftly and definitely.

He had in front of him five hundred armed men, and behind him a precipice thirty feet high; he jumped from the cliff upon which he was standing, fell in the sand, and rose to his feet unhurt. His aide-de-camp, Campana and General Franchescetti took the same leap with equally happy results, and the three hurried down to the shore across a bit of woodland, which reached to within a hundred feet of the water, and concealed them from their assailants for a moment. As they left the woods they were greeted by another discharge; the balls whistled around them but did no harm, and the fugitives kept on to the shore.

Not till then did the king perceive that the boat in which he had come ashore had returned to the felucca. The three vessels which made up his fleet, instead of remaining to support his landing, had put to sea again under full sail. Barbara, the Maltese, was not only rendering the success of Murat's plan impossible, but he was taking away with him his last hope of safety and his very life. It was impossible to believe in such treachery, and Murat looked upon what he was doing simply as a bit of manœuvring; seeing a fishing boat hauled up on the beach, surrounded by nets spread out to dry, he shouted to his companions:

"Let us float that boat!"

All three addressed themselves to the task of getting her into the water, with the energy of despair.

No one had dared to leap from the cliff in pursuit, and as they were compelled to make a long detour, the fugitives were left to themselves for a few moments. But they soon heard shouts drawing near, and Pellegrino and Trenta Capelli, followed by the whole population of Pizzo, came out upon the beach within a hundred and fifty yards of the spot where Murat, Franchescetti, and

Campana were exhausting themselves in their efforts to pull the boat down over the sand. The shouts were at once followed by a discharge of musketry, and Campana fell with a bullet through his heart. Meanwhile they had succeeded in floating the boat; General Franchescetti leaped aboard and Murat undertook to follow him, but he failed to see that his spurs were caught in the meshes of the net. The boat, under the impulse of the vigorous push he gave her, escaped from his hands, and he fell headlong with his feet on the beach and his face in the water. Before he had time to rise, his pursuers were upon him; in an instant they had torn off his epaulettes and his coat, and would have torn him to pieces as well, had not Giorgio Pellegrino and Trenta Capelli taken his life under their protection, and defended him from the populace. Each of them took one of his arms, and thus, as a prisoner, he traversed the square, where but an hour before he had claimed recognition as king.

His conductors led him to the castle, put him into the common prison, and closed the door upon him; and the king found himself in the midst of an assemblage of thieves and murderers, who, having no idea who he was, took him to be a criminal like themselves, and greeted him with insults and hooting.

After a quarter of an hour the prison-door was opened again, and Commandant Mattei entered; he found Murat standing with his arms folded, head erect, and a haughty expression on his handsome features. There was something indescribably noble about this half-naked man, whose face was stained with mud and blood. Mattei bowed respectfully.

"Commandant," said Murat, recognizing his rank by his epaulettes, "look around you, and tell me if this is a suitable prison for a king!"

Thereupon a strange thing came to pass; these hardened criminals, who had greeted Murat with insults, when they believed him to be one of their own kind, bent the knee before the majesty of royalty, which Pellegrino and Trenta Capelli refused to respect, and drew back in silence to the farthest corner of the cell. Misfortune caused Joachim to be crowned anew.

Commandant Mattei muttered an apology, and requested Murat to follow him to a room which had been prepared for him. Before going out, the ex-king took a handful of gold-pieces from his pocket, and let them fall in a shower on the floor of the cell.

"There!" he said to the prisoners; "it shall not be said that you received a visit from a king, and were not liberally treated by him, though he be discrowned and a captive."

"Vive Joachim!" shouted the prisoners.

Murat smiled bitterly. If those words had been repeated by a like number of voices an hour before on the public square, instead of echoing uselessly now in a prison-cell, they would have made him King of Naples! The most momentous results sometimes hang upon such slender threads, that it seems as if God and Satan were throwing dice, and that the life or death of men, the rise or fall of empires were the stakes.

Murat followed Mattei to a small room generally occupied by the gaoler, and which he gave up to the king. Mattei was about to withdraw when Murat said to him:

"Monsieur le Commandant, I should like a perfumed bath."

"That is a difficult thing to obtain, Sire."

"Here are fifty ducats; send out and buy all the eau de Cologne that can be found. Oh! and send me a tailor!"

"It will be impossible to find a man here who can contrive anything better than the ordinary peasant's dress."

"Let some one go to Monteleone then, and bring all the tailors he can find."

The commandant bowed and went out.

Murat was in his bath when the Chevalier Alcala, general in the service of the Prince de l'Infantado, and governor of the town was announced. He sent Murat damask coverlids, linen sheets and an easy chair. Murat was very grateful for the courtesy, and seemed to recover his serenity in great measure.

The same day at two o'clock, General Nunziante arrived from Saint-Tropea with three thousand men. Murat was delighted to meet an old acquaintance, but at the very first word, he perceived that he was in the presence of a judge, and that he had come, not simply to pay him a friendly visit, but to subject him to a formal examination. Murat refused to make any further reply than that he was on his way from Corsica to Trieste, with a passport from the Emperor of Austria to enter his dominions, when the storm and lack of provisions forced him to put in at Pizzo. All other questions he met with a persistent refusal to speak; and at last, wearied by his questioner's pertinacity, he said:

"General, will you lend me some clothes, so that I may leave my bath?"

The general realized that he could expect nothing further from him, so he saluted and left the room. Ten minutes later Murat received a complete uniform, in which he at once dressed himself, asked for pen and ink, and wrote to the general commanding the Austrian troops at Naples, to the English ambassador, and to his wife, to inform them of his detention at Pizzo. When his letters were all written he rose and walked excitedly

about the room for a few moments; then, feeling the need of fresh air, he opened the window and found that it looked upon the same piece of beach where he was arrested.

Two men were digging a hole in the sand at the foot of the little circular redoubt. Murat watched them mechanically. When their task was done they went into a house near by, and soon came out again carrying a dead body. The king searched his memory, and it seemed to him that he could remember seeing someone fall by his side during that terrible scene; but he had no idea who it was.

The body was entirely naked; but the king recognized Campana by the long black hair and the youthful figure. He was his favorite aide-de-camp.

This whole scene, witnessed from the window of a prison, at the solemn twilight hour—the burial in the sand close by the murmuring sea—moved Murat more profoundly than his own misfortunes had done. Great tears started from his eyes and rolled silently down his lion's face.

At this moment General Nunziante returned and surprised him with his arms extended and his face bathed in tears. Murat heard the door open and turned to see who it was; observing the old soldier's amazement, he said to him:

"Yes, General, yes, I am weeping. I am weeping over the pitiful fate of that youth of twenty-four, whom his family placed in my care, and for whose death I am responsible; I am weeping for the future, rich in boundless possibilities, which might have been his, but which has come to an end in an unknown grave in an enemy's country. O Campana! Campana! if ever I ascend the throne again, I will build a royal tomb for thee!"

The general had ordered dinner to be served in a room adjoining that in which the king was confined; Murat followed him thither, and took his place at the table, but he could not eat. The scene he had just witnessed had broken his heart; and yet this same man had ridden over the battle-fields of Aboukir, Eylau, and Moscow, without a shudder!

After dinner Murat returned to his own room, handed General Nunziante the various letters he had written, and begged to be left alone. The general complied with his request and left the room.

Murat strode back and forth, and up and down, stopping now and then at the window, but without opening it. At last he seemed to overcome a feeling of profound repugnance, put his hand upon the fastening, and threw the window open. It was a calm, clear night, and the shore could be seen for a long distance. He looked for the place where Campana was buried, and saw two dogs scratching at the grave. Thereupon he closed the window violently and threw himself, all dressed, upon his bed. After a while, fearing that his agitation might be ascribed to his alarm on his own account, he undressed himself, went to bed, and slept, or pretended to sleep, all night.

The tailors he had sent for arrived on the ninth in the morning. He ordered a quantity of clothes, and was very particular to explain what he wanted to the most capricious and trivial detail. He was thus occupied when General Nunziante came in. He listened sadly to the elaborate orders the king was giving, for he had just received instructions by telegraph to have the ex-king of Naples tried by court martial as a public enemy. But he found the king in such a tranquil and confident frame of mind, and so light-hearted we might almost

say, that he had not the heart to inform him that he was to be tried; he even took it upon himself to postpone the convening of the court-martial until he received written instructions to that effect. They arrived on the evening of the twelfth, and were in these words:

"NAPLES, 9th October, 1815.

"We, Ferdinand, by the grace of God, etc., have decreed and do decree as follows:

"Art. 1. General Murat is to appear before a court martial, the members of which will be selected by our Minister of War.

"Art. 2. If condemned, he will be allowed only a half-hour to receive the consolations of religion.

"*Signed:* FERDINAND."

A decree of the Minister of War contained the names of the members of the court; they were:

Giuseppe Fasculo, adjutant, commandant and chief of staff, President;

Raffaello Scalfaro, commanding the legion of Lower Calabria;

Latereo Natati, lieutenant-colonel in the royal marines;

Gennaro Lanzetta, lieutenant-colonel of the corps of engineers;

W. T., captain of artillery;

François de Vengé, the same;

Francesco Martellari, lieutenant of artillery;

Francesco Froio, lieutenant in the third regiment;

Giovanni della Camera, procureur-general of the criminal tribunal of Lower Calabria; and

Francesco Papavassi, clerk.

The court convened at night. On the 13th October, at six in the morning, Captain Stratti entered the king's

cell. He was sound asleep, and Stratti started to go out again, but as he walked toward the door he stumbled over a chair, and the noise awoke Murat.

"What do you want of me, Captain?" he asked.

Stratti tried to speak, but his voice failed him.

"Aha!" said Murat, "you must have had news from Naples."

"Yes, Sire," muttered Stratti.

"To what effect?"

"You are to be tried, Sire."

"By whom is any judgment to be pronounced on me, I pray to know? Where will they find my peers to try me? If I am deemed to be a king, a court of kings must be convened; if I am deemed to be a marshal of France, still I am entitled to a court of marshals; and if they look upon me as nothing more than a general, which is the very least they can do, I must have a jury of generals."

"Sire, you are declared to be a public enemy, and as such you are amenable to a court-martial: it is the law which you enacted yourself against the rebels."

"That law was made for brigands, not for crowned heads, Monsieur," said Murat contemptuously. "I am ready; let them assassinate me, it's all right; but I would not have believed King Ferdinand capable of such a deed."

"Sire, do you not wish to know the names of your judges?"

"To be sure, Monsieur, to be sure; it must be a curious list; read it, I am listening."

Stratti read the names we cited above, while Murat listened with curling lip.

"Ah!" he remarked, when the captain had finished; "it seems that they have taken every precaution."

"What do you mean, Sire?"

"Why, do you not know that every one of those men, except Francesco Froio, the judge-advocate, owes his rank to me? They will be afraid of being charged with acting from a sense of gratitude, and the decree will be unanimous, with the possible exception of one vote."

"But suppose, Sire, that you were to appear before the court, and plead your cause in person?"

"Silence, Monsieur, silence," said Murat. "Too many pages of history would have to be destroyed before I could recognize as my judges these men who have been appointed to sit in judgment upon me. Such a court is not competent to try me, and I should be ashamed to appear before it; I know that I cannot save my life, so let me at least save the dignity of the crown."

At this point Lieutenant Francesco Froio came in to question the prisoner, and asked his name, his age and his place of birth. Murat rose to his full height, with an expression that was almost terrifying in its lofty dignity.

"I am Joachim Napoléon, King of the two Sicilies," he retorted, "and I order you to leave the room."

The judge-advocate obeyed without a word.

Murat thereupon slipped on his trousers only, and asked Stratti if he might write his farewell to his wife and children. The captain could not speak, but made an affirmative gesture, and Joachim at once sat down at a table and wrote what follows:*

"Dear Caroline of my heart:

"The fatal hour has come, and I am to suffer the last

*We can answer for the authenticity of this letter, having ourselves transcribed it at Pizzo, from the copy which the Chevalier Alcala preserved of the original.

of earthly punishments; in an hour you will have no husband and my children no father; remember me, I implore you, and keep my memory green.

"I die an innocent man, and my life is taken in pursuance of an unjust judgment.

"Adieu, my Achilles; adieu, my Lætitia; adieu, my Lucien; adieu, my Louise.

"Show yourselves worthy of me; I leave you in a foreign land which is full of my enemies; show yourselves superior to adversity, and remember not to think yourselves of any more importance than you are by reflecting upon what you have been.

"Adieu; I give you my blessing. Never curse my memory. Remember that the greatest sorrow I am conscious of while undergoing my doom is the having to die far from my children and my wife, with no friend at hand to close my eyes.

"Adieu, my Caroline; adieu, my children; receive my paternal blessing, my tears of affection, and my last kisses.

"Adieu, adieu; do not forget your unfortunate father,

"JOACHIM MURAT.

"Pizzo, October 15, 1815."

He cut a lock of his hair and wrapped it in the letter. General Nunziante came in as he was doing it, and Murat went up to him with outstretched hand.

"General," he said, "you are a husband and father, and some day you will know what it is to leave your wife and children; swear to me that this letter shall be forwarded."

"By my epaulettes!" said the general, wiping his eyes.

"Come, come, General, courage!" said Murat; "we

are soldiers, we know what death is. A single favor: you will let me give the word for them to fire, will you not?"

The general nodded his head in token that his last request should be granted. At that moment the judge-advocate entered with the sentence of the court martial in his hand. Murat divined what he had come for.

"Read it, Monsieur," he said coolly; "I am ready to hear it."

The judge-advocate complied. Murat proved to be right in his prediction that there would be but one vote against the death penalty.

When the reading was at an end, Murat turned to Nunziante.

"General," he said, "do not think for one moment that my heart does not distinguish between the instrument which deals the blow and the hand which guides it. I would not have believed that Ferdinand would have me shot like a dog; and he does not recoil from such an infamous deed! No matter, let us say no more about it. I accuse my judges, but not my executioners. What time do you propose to carry the sentence into effect?"

"Fix the time yourself, Sire."

Murat drew from his fob a watch which bore his wife's portrait on the reverse; it so happened that it was turned in such a way that his eyes fell upon the portrait instead of the face; he gazed fondly at it.

"Look, General," he said, showing it to Nunziante; "that is a portrait of the queen; you know her; is it not very like her?"

The general turned his head away. Murat sighed and returned the watch to his fob.

"Well, Sire," said the judge-advocate, "what time shall it be?"

"Ah! to be sure," said Murat with a smile; "I forgot why I took out my watch when I saw Caroline's picture."

He looked at his watch again, but this time at its face.

"Well, let us say four o'clock, if you agree; it is after three now, so that I ask for fifty minutes. Is it too much, Monsieur?"

The judge-advocate bowed and went out, and the general was about to follow him.

"Shall I not see you again, Nunziante?" said Murat.

"My orders require me to be present at your death, Sire; but my courage is not sufficient for that."

"Very well, General, very well; I excuse you from being there at the very last; but I want to see you once more to say farewell to you and embrace you."

"I will meet you on the way, Sire."

"Thanks; now leave me to myself."

"Sire, there are two priests without."

Murat made a gesture of annoyance.

"Do you care to receive them?" the general continued.

"Yes, let them come in."

The general went out. A moment later the two priests appeared in the doorway. One was named Don Francesco Pellegrino; he was the uncle of the man who had caused the king's arrest and consequently his death. The other was Don Antonio Masdea.

"For what purpose have you come?" Murat demanded.

"To ask if you choose to die the death of a Christian?"

"I will die the death of a soldier. Leave me."

Don Francesco Pellegrino withdrew; he was ill at

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ease, doubtless, in Joachim's presence. But Antonio Masdea remained upon the threshold.

"Did you not hear?" Murat asked him.

"I did," the old man replied; "but permit me, Sire, to refuse to believe that that is your last word. This is not the first time that I have seen you and had occasion to seek a favor at your hands."

"What do you refer to?"

"When your Majesty came to Pizzo in 1810, I asked you for twenty-five thousand francs to finish our church; your Majesty sent me forty thousand."

"It must be that I foresaw that I should be buried here," rejoined Murat, smiling.

"Well, Sire, I love to think that you will not refuse my second prayer, as you did not refuse the first. Sire, I implore you on my knees!"

The old man knelt at Murat's feet.

"Oh, die a Christian!" he exclaimed.

"Will it give you so much pleasure, pray?" said Murat.

"Sire, I would gladly give my few remaining days to obtain from God His blessed permission that His Spirit should descend upon you in your last hour."

"Oh, well!" said Murat, "hear my confession: I accuse myself of having, when a child, disobeyed my parents; since I became a man I have nothing for which to reproach myself."

"Sire, will you give me a certificate that you die in the faith of Christ?"

"Of course."

And Murat seized a pen and wrote:

"I, Joachim Murat, die a true Christian and a believer in the Holy Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church. And he signed it.

"Now, father," he continued, "if you have a third favor to ask, be quick about it, for in half an hour it will be too late."

The castle clock struck the half after three, as he spoke.

The priest signified that he had no more to say, and went out in obedience to Murat's expressed desire to be alone.

Murat paced up and down his room for a short time, then sat down on his bed and let his head fall in his hands. Doubtless, during the quarter hour that he passed absorbed in thought, his whole life passed before him, from the inn, where he first saw the light, to the palace which he occupied during his ephemeral royalty; doubtless, his adventurous career unrolled itself before his mind, like a golden dream, a brilliant delusion, or a tale from the *Thousand and One Nights*. Like a rainbow, he had shone during the storm, and like a rainbow his beginning and his end were lost in the clouds which surrounded his birth and his death.

At last he emerged from his retrospective contemplation, and raised his pallid but unwrinkled brow. He went to the mirror and arranged his hair, for his strange temperament was manifest to the last. As if he were betrothed to Death, he beautified himself for the nuptials.

Four o'clock struck.

Murat himself went to the door and opened it.

General Nunziante was waiting.

"Thanks, General," said Murat; "you have kept your word. Embrace me now, and withdraw at once if you choose."

The general threw himself into his arms, weeping and without the power to utter a word.

"Come, be brave," said Murat; "you see how calm I am."

His calmness was the very thing which made the general weak; he rushed from the corridor and out of the castle like a madman.

The king at once went down into the courtyard, where everything was ready. Nine men and a corporal were drawn up in line near the door of the council chamber, facing a wall twelve feet high; three feet from the wall was a small platform, a single step from the ground. Murat stepped upon the platform, which raised him about a foot above the soldiers who were to execute the sentence of the court-martial. Standing there, he took out his watch, kissed his wife's portrait, and with his eyes fixed upon it, gave the word to fire.

At the word five of the nine men fired, but Murat remained erect. The soldiers were ashamed to fire upon their king, and aimed above his head.

There had never been a moment in Murat's whole life, when the lion-like courage, which was his most distinguishing quality, shone forth so magnificently as now; not a muscle of his face changed, nor did he manifest the slightest indication of weakness; but he looked towards the soldiers with an expression in which gratitude was not unmixed with bitterness.

"Thanks, my friends," he said, "but as you will be obliged to aim true, sooner or later, do not prolong my agony. All that I ask of you is to aim at my heart, and spare my face. Now, let us begin again."

With the same voice, the same tranquillity, and the same unmoved countenance, he repeated the fatal words, slowly and with moderation as if he were putting the men through the manual of arms. But their aim was surer than before, and at the word "fire," he fell,

pierced by eight balls, without a sigh, and without letting go the watch, which he held tightly clasped in his left hand.*

The soldiers took up the body and laid it on the bed, where he had been sitting ten minutes before, and the captain placed a guard at the door.

In the evening a man asked to be allowed to enter the mortuary chamber, and upon the sentinel's refusal to admit him, he demanded to speak to the commandant of the castle. He was taken before him, and produced an order which the commandant read with surprise, mingled with disgust. When he had read it through, he went with the man to the door of the chamber.

"Allow Signor Luidgi to pass," he said to the sentry.

The sentry presented arms to his officer, and Luidgi entered the room.

Ten minutes had not elapsed when he came out again, holding in his hand a blood-stained handkerchief wrapped about some object which the sentry could not make out.

An hour later a cabinet-maker brought the coffin which was to contain the king's mortal remains. He went into the room, and immediately called the sentry in a tone of unspeakable horror. The soldier half opened the door to see what had caused the man's fright; he pointed to the bed, on which lay a headless corpse.

When King Ferdinand died they found Murat's head preserved in spirits of wine in a secret cupboard in his bedroom.†

*Madame Murat subsequently purchased the watch for two hundred louis.

†As I am not a believer in atrocities committed without motive, I asked General T. the explanation of this. He said that as Murat was tried and shot in an out-of-the-way corner of Calabria, the King of Naples was always afraid that some adventurer would come forward and use his name; if

A week after the execution at Pizzo, each of those most concerned in bringing it about had received his due reward: Trenta Capelli was promoted to a colonelcy, General Nunziante was created a marquis, and Luidgi was poisoned.

that had ever happened, the production of Murat's head would have been a sufficient reply.

DERUES

DERUES*

One day in the month of September, 1751, about half past five in the afternoon, a score or more of children came rushing out of one of the monastic schools of Chartres, cackling and pushing and tumbling about like a covey of frightened partridges. Their delight at being released from their long and wearisome captivity was doubly great from the fact that it came half an hour earlier than usual, owing to a trifling accident that had befallen one of the instructors; and the result of the demoralization in the teaching body was that the brother whose duty it was to take the scholars home was unable to do so on this particular evening. Thus in the first place they were relieved from thirty or forty minutes of work, and secondly they found themselves unexpectedly as free as air, emancipated from the surveillance of the black corporal in the cassock, who usually maintained discipline in the ranks: thirty minutes (a century at their age!) of unrestrained laughter and play in prospect. Each one of them promised most solemnly, under pain of severe punishment, to return at once to the paternal

*The name is commonly pronounced and written Desrues. This is an error which we desire to rectify. The bookseller, Cailleau, author of a life of this great criminal, wrote "Desrues," and Arnaud Baculard, who also wrote his life, "Derues." The erroneous spelling of Cailleau has been adopted and in a certain sense confirmed by the article in the "Biographie Universelle;" and it appears again in M. J. P. J. Champagnac's "Collection of Celebrated Cases, old and new," published at Paris in 1884. A document on file at the Archives Nationales decides the question, and leaves no possibility of doubt. We quote this document in a later note. (See note to page 261,)

nest, without stopping to linger by the way; but the air was fresh and pure, and the fields about them laughed invitingly. The school, or, if you please, the cage, which had just been thrown open, was located at the far end of one of the suburbs of the city. They had but a step or two to go before they were in a clump of woods, through which flowed a rippling brook, while beyond it the monotony of the broad, fertile plain was broken by a tract of undulating ground. How could they fail to disobey, how fail to yield to the longing to try their wings? The perfume of the meadows went to the head of the most virtuous and intoxicated the most timid. They determined to betray the confidence of the reverend Jesuit fathers, even at the risk of being compelled, if their wrong-doing were discovered, to pay for an instant of forbidden pleasure by suffering ignoble chastisement.

A flock of house-sparrows would have rushed much more demurely into the little clump of woods. They were all of about the same age: the oldest was only nine. They stripped off their jackets and waistcoats and threw them on the grass with their baskets and copy books and dictionaries and catechisms. While the crowd of fair-haired, rosy-cheeked youngsters, with their fresh smiling faces, were noisily deliberating what game they should select, one child, who had taken no part in the general gaiety, but had been drawn on by the torrent and had had no earlier opportunity to retreat, crept stealthily in among the trees and darted away when he thought no one was looking.

But one of his comrades saw him and shouted:

"Look! Antoine is running away!"

Two of the fleetest runners of the band started in pursuit of the fugitive, who was soon overtaken in spite

of the lead he had on them; they seized him by the collar, and dragged him back as a deserter.

"Where were you going?" someone asked him.

"Back to my cousins," he replied; "there's no harm in that, is there?"

"You're nothing but a coward and sneak," said one of his schoolmates, approaching him and shaking his fist in his face; "you were going to tell the master where we are."

"Pierre," said Antoine, "you know that I never tell a lie."

"Lie! Why, this very morning you pretended that I had taken a book you lost, just to get me punished and pay me up for the kick I gave you yesterday that you didn't dare give back."

Antoine looked up toward the sky, and folded his arms across his chest.

"My good Buttel, you are wrong," he said. "I have always been taught that we must forgive injuries."

"Look, look! you'd think he was praying!" cried the boys; and they plied the offender with insulting remarks accompanied with not a few blows.

Pierre Buttel, who exercised a great influence over them, made them stop.

"You are a bad-hearted fellow, Antoine," he said, "a cunning sneak. We must put an end to this. Take off your coat and let's fight. If you say so, we'll fight every morning and night till the end of the month."

This suggestion was received with tumultuous applause, and Pierre at once prepared to carry it out by rolling his sleeves up to his elbows. He could hardly have realized what he was saying, however; otherwise his high-sounding challenge would have been a piece of most unworthy cowardice on his part. The issue of a

combat between the two could never have been in doubt; one of them was a boy with a bright, fearless eye, springy gait, and supple, active limbs—a sketch in miniature of a sturdy, vigorous man; the other, who was also younger than he, was small and puny, with a sickly, leaden-hued complexion; he looked as if the slightest breath would blow him over. His thin arms and legs were attached to his body like a spider's legs; his hair was of a shade closely akin to red, and there was no indication that any blood was circulating under his white skin.

His consciousness of his own weakness made him timid, and imparted a restless mobility to his eyes. The general effect of his features was perplexing; by looking at his face, it would have been impossible perhaps at the first glance to say to which sex he belonged.* This combination of two natures, this strange mixture of feminine sensitiveness without feminine grace, and of abortive virility, stamped his countenance with an indefinable seal. When one's eyes fell upon the sorry creature it was hard to remove them. If he had been endowed with more strength, he would have been an object of terror to his comrades; he would have wielded through fear the same power over them that Pierre Buttel owed to his good humor and his indefatigable fondness for play, for that

*We put no faith in the reports that Derues was of the species of hermaphrodites. But it is certain that the distinctive characteristics of his sex did not manifest themselves until he was twenty-two years old, and then as the result of an operation. May not this phenomenon serve as a partial explanation of his abnormal, incredible villany? Is there not here a physiological question which science might well investigate? Being thus outside the natural laws of mankind, a stranger to the emotions and appetites, or if you please, to the affections, which are more or less developed in all adults, he was tempted by none but evil impulses, acting without counterpoise and without distraction. Thence, it may be, the total absence of hesitation and repentance, the hypocrisy which nothing could put down, and which did not change even when it had ceased to deceive anyone.

mean exterior concealed an extraordinary strength of will and capacity for dissimulation.

By instinct the scholars collected around Pierre, and made him their leader; by instinct, too, they kept aloof from Antoine, who produced much the same effect upon them as the sight of a snake. They avoided touching him unless it was to demonstrate their physical superiority. He never voluntarily took part in their games; very rarely were his thin, colorless lips parted by a smile, and on those rare occasions it was a most sinister smile for a child like him.

"Will you fight?" Pierre repeated.

Antoine cast a quick glance around. He had no hope of escape, for he was hemmed in on all sides by a double row of boys. His prospects were the same whether he accepted or refused the battle; he was in danger of a sound drubbing whether he chose peace or war. Although his heart was beating fast, no sign of emotion appeared upon his livid face. An unforeseen danger might have extorted a cry from him, but he had had time to collect himself, time to take shelter behind a wall of hypocrisy. As soon as he got to the point where he could lie and deceive, his courage returned, and the instinct of trickery, once aroused, dominated every other sentiment. Instead of replying to this second challenge, he knelt on the ground and said to Pierre:

"You are the strongest."

His humility disarmed his antagonist's wrath.

"Get up," he said; "I won't touch you if you won't defend yourself."

"Pierre," rejoined Antoine, without changing his position, "I swear, in the name of God and the Virgin Mary, that I wasn't going to tell of you. I was going back to my cousins' to study my lessons for to-morrow, for you

know how stupid I am. If you think I have done you any wrong, please forgive me."

Pierre put out his hand and lifted him up.

"Will you be a good fellow, Antoine, and play with us?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's all right, then, and we'll forget all this."

"What game are we going to play?" said the boy, pulling off his coat.

"The thieves and police," one of the others answered.

"Good idea!" said Pierre Buttel.

By virtue of the legitimate authority vested in him he forthwith divided the boys into two bodies, ten highwaymen, whom he took command of in person, and ten police officers who were to pursue them. Antoine was one of the latter.

The malefactors, armed with wooden daggers and guns torn from the willows which overhung the stream, started off first at full speed and plunged into the defiles of the miniature mountains behind the wood. It was agreed that it should be considered real warfare, and that every prisoner taken on either side should be tried on the spot.

The robbers scattered in parties of two and three, and went into ambuscade in the ravines. A few minutes later the officers of the law followed them. There were chance engagements and surprises, and some few skirmishes, but when they came to blows, Pierre Buttel's forces, being skillfully placed, came together at a blast upon his whistle, and the gendarmerie were compelled to retreat. But there came a time when an unusually long interval passed without that magic signal; the robbers became anxious and lay close in their lairs. It seems that Pierre, deaf to everything but the promptings of

his courage, had undertaken to defend single-handed the entrance to a dangerous defile and to force the whole hostile force to a standstill there. While he was holding them in check, half of his men, in ambush at the left, were to skirt the foot of the mountain, and come up at the sound of his whistle; the other half, stationed at a like distance on the other side, were to execute the same manœuvre on the heights. The gendarmes, if they fell into the trap, would be taken in flank and rear, and being thrown into confusion by the twofold attack, would be forced to surrender at discretion.

Chance, which often decides the fate of battles, foiled this clever strategy. Though straining every nerve to see and hear, Pierre, while looking straight before him, did not discover that the enemy had taken another road than that he had mentally assigned to them in calculating the success of his combinations. They fell upon him unexpectedly from behind, and before he had time to draw his whistle they closed his mouth with a handkerchief and bound his hands. Six of them remained on the ground to put to rout the leaderless band of miscreants; the others carried the prisoner off to the little wood.

The robbers, failing to hear the appointed signal, did not dare to stir. According to the terms agreed upon, Pierre Buttel was tried by the gendarmes, sitting as a criminal court, and as he was taken with arms in his hands and scorned to offer any defence, the trial was short. He was sentenced, by a unanimous judgment, to be hanged, and the sentence was at once carried out at the demand of the robber-chief himself, who insisted that the comedy should be played through to the end, and pointed out a tree from which they could conveniently suspend him.

"But how will you hold yourself up there, Pierre?" asked one of his judges.

"What a fool you are!" retorted the culprit; "*pardieu!* I choose to be hanged for the joke of it. Look, and you'll see."

He took several pieces of cord which were around his comrades' books, and tied them together, then piled up the copy books and dictionaries, stood erect upon the uncertain support, and, standing on tiptoe, made one end of the string fast to a stout branch which extended horizontally from the trunk of the tree. He then made a slip-noose on the other end, and put his head through it, imitating the contortions and grimaces of a real victim of the law. The boys all shouted with laughter, and the culprit laughed louder than the rest. Three of the gendarmes went off to find their companions and bring them back to look at the comical sight; one only, exhausted by his exertions, remained by the gallows.

"Ah, ça! monsieur executioner," said Pierre, protruding his tongue at him; "are the books firm? it seems to me as if they were moving."

"No, no," Antoine replied;—it was he who remained behind—"don't be afraid, Pierre."

"All right; only, if they should fall, I'm afraid the string isn't long enough."

"Do you think so?"

A terrible thought shone like a flash of lightning in the boy's eyes. The young hyena scented blood for the first time.

Antoine measured with his eye the height of the pile upon which Pierre stood, and compared it with the length of the string from the branch to his neck.

Meanwhile it had become almost dark; the shadows were growing thicker in the woods, streaks of pale light

fell upon the ground between the trees, the leaves were black and shivered in the wind. Antoine stood silent and motionless, listening to hear if there was any noise in their neighborhood.

It would be an interesting study for the moralist to watch the development of the first thought of crime in the recesses of the human heart, and to see how the poisonous seed grows and stifles all other sentiments; a useful lesson might be learned from this struggle of two opposing principles, though it may be but a feeble struggle in the most perverse hearts. In those cases where the judgment is capable of making the distinction, and the will of making the choice between good and evil, there is no blame to be awarded except to the culprit himself, and responsibility for the most heinous crime is not to be sought beyond its author. It is the act of a human being, induced by passions which it is possible to subdue, and upon which the blame can be fixed with untroubled mind and a clear conscience. But how can one explain without being tempted to substitute a belief in blind fatality for one's idea of eternal sovereign justice, how can one explain this sudden vision of murder in the mind of a child? How is it possible not to fall into perplexity between the reasoning power which yields to temptation, and the instinct which manifests itself, and not to cry that the designs of God, who holds back the one and pushes forward the other, are sometimes mysterious and inscrutable, and that we must bow to them without understanding them?

"Can you hear them coming back?" asked Pierre Buttel.

"I can't hear anything," said Antoine; and a nervous trembling shook his whole body.

"Oh! pshaw! I'm tired of being dead; I want to

come to life again and run after them. Hold the books while I untie the knot."

"If you move, the books will fall; wait till I hold them."

He knelt down by the pile, and gave it a violent blow with all the strength he could muster.

Pierre put his hands to his neck.

"What are you doing?" he cried in a stifled voice.

Antoine folded his arms and replied:

"I'm taking my revenge."

There were several inches between Pierre's feet and the ground. The weight of his body bent the branch a little when the support was first taken away, but it swung back at once and the poor child wore himself out in fruitless struggles. Every movement that he made drew the knots tighter and tighter; his legs waved in the air, and he felt about with his arms for something that he could seize; but soon his movements became slower and weaker, his limbs stiffened, and his hands fell by his sides. Of that strong young life all that remained was a dead body turning and twisting at the end of a rope.

Thereupon Antoine began to call for help, and when his companions arrived they found him weeping and tearing his hair. His sobs choked him so, and his grief was so intense that he could hardly make them understand him when he told them how the books fell from under Pierre's feet and how he tried, but in vain, to hold him up in his arms.

This child, left an orphan at the age of three, was brought up at first by one of his relatives who turned him out of doors for stealing, and he was finally taken in charge by two female cousins, who had before this taken fright at his precocious perversity of character.

This pallid, sickly creature, an incorrigible thief, a consummate hypocrite and cold-blooded assassin, was predestined to immortality as a noteworthy criminal, and to take his place in due time among the most execrable monsters that humanity has had to blush for. His name was ANTOINE FRANÇOIS DERUES.

Twenty years had passed since that horrible and mysterious occurrence, which no one up to that time had undertaken to investigate. On a certain evening in June, 1771, four persons were assembled in a modestly furnished apartment on the third floor of a house on Rue Saint Victor. Three were women, and one an ecclesiastic, the latter a table-boarder of that one of the women who hired the apartment. The other two were neighbors. The four were good friends and often met in the evening to play at cards. They were seated around a table all ready for the game; but although it was almost ten o'clock, the cards had not been touched. They were speaking in undertones, their customary gaiety being banished for the evening by a disquieting disclosure that had been made to them.

Some one knocked gently at the door, although they had heard no footsteps on the creaking wooden stairs. A whining voice begged them to open the door.

The tenant of the apartment, Madame Legrand,* rose and admitted a man of some twenty-six years of age. When the four friends saw who it was they exchanged a meaning glance which the newcomer detected but gave no sign. He bowed to the three women one after another,

*This woman is designated in the biographies, etc., only by the initial L. The name Legrand is given by Cailleau and Baculard to the tinsmith of Chartres with whom Derues served an apprenticeship. A person to whom we are indebted for some details concerning this poisoner, has an impression that this woman also was named Legrand. We adopt his theory, without vouching for it.

and saluted the abbé several times with the most profound respect. He asked pardon by signs for disturbing them, and walking up to Madame Legrand, coughed several times, and said in a weak voice, as if he were suffering intensely:

"Good mistress, you and these other ladies will excuse me, I trust, for making my appearance at this hour in such a costume; but I am sick and I was obliged to get up."

The man's costume was beyond controversy an extraordinary one: he was enveloped in an ample dressing-gown of some flowered stuff, and his head was covered with a night-cap, gathered at the top and surmounted by a muslin fringe.* His general appearance was in keeping with what he said as to the state of his health. He was not more than four feet ten; his limbs were slender, his face thin and pale and drawn. Attired as we have said, coughing incessantly, dragging his feet along as if he had not the strength to lift them, holding a lighted candle in one hand and in the other an egg, he looked like a caricature, like some hypochondriac escaped from the custody of Monsieur Purgon. And yet none ever felt moved to smile when they looked at him, notwithstanding his valetudinarian appearance and his air of studied humility. In the perpetual blinking of his deep-set round eyes, which shone behind their tawny lashes with a dull fire he could not wholly subdue, there was a reminder of the bird of prey which shuns the

*This style of night-cap which Derues wore on the day of his execution kept the name of the "Derues cap." But the name of its creator caused it to fall into discredit, and almost everybody abandoned it at once. It was a piece of linen, either white or colored, of about the size and shape of the ordinary cotton night-cap, but the top was adorned with a piece of muslin or lace gathered up with a running string. Old men and those who did not care to beautify themselves for the night wore a simple top-knot of ribbon on this headdress.

light, and in the shape of his face, the curve of his nose, the involuntary trembling of his thin receding lips, a mixture of servility and impudence, of cunning and sincerity. But there is no book that teaches us how to read a man's character unerringly in his face, and not until special circumstances had aroused the suspicions of the four friends did they notice the points we have mentioned, and cease to be, as they had been, dupes of the grimaces of this clever comedian, past master in the art of deceiving.

After a moment's silence he resumed, as if he did not wish to embarrass them by gazing at them without speaking:

"I came to ask a favor at your hands."

"What do you want, Derues?" said Madame Legrand.

A violent cough which racked his frame prevented him from replying at first; when it had ceased to some extent, he said to the abbé, making an effort to smile:

"What I really ought to ask in my present state of health, father, is your blessing and your intercession with God to obtain pardon for my sins. But every man clings to the life God gave him. We do not easily abandon hope; and furthermore I have always considered it sinful to neglect such means as are in our power to prolong life, since it is simply a period of probation, and the longer and more severe the test, the greater will be the reward in a better world. To whatever happens to us we should reply in the words of the Virgin Mary to the angel who came to announce to her the mystery of the Incarnation: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.'"

"You are right," rejoined the abbé, fixing his eyes upon him in a stern and searching gaze, which he

endured without flinching: 'God undertakes to punish and to reward; though one may deceive his fellowmen, he cannot deceive Him. 'Righteous art Thou, O Lord,' saith the psalmist, 'and upright are Thy judgments.'"

"He also said: 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether,'" replied Derues instantly.

This warfare of quotations from the Scriptures might have continued for hours, and he not have been taken at fault, if the abbé had thought fit to pursue it.

These grave, devout words in the mouth of a man arrayed in such ridiculous style, seemed almost like sacrilege, of which the malignity was relieved by the touch of absurdity. He saw the impression he was creating, and continued:

"I have wandered away from what I came to ask you, good Madame Legrand; I went to bed early, I was in such pain, but I found it impossible to sleep. I have no fire in my room; will you please fix me a mulled egg?"

"Couldn't your servant have done it for you?" inquired Madame Legrand.

"I gave her leave to go out this evening, and late as it is she hasn't yet come in. If I had had a fire I wouldn't have troubled you, but I didn't want to light one at this time of night. You know that I am always afraid of some accident, and the mischief is so soon done!"

"Very well, very well," said Madame Legrand, "go back to your room and my servant will bring you what you want."

"Thank you," said Derues with a bow, "thank you."

He started to leave the room, but she called him back.

"In a week, Derues, you must pay me half of the

twelve hundred francs due me on the sale of my business."

"Is it due so soon?"

"Certainly it is, and I need the money. Had you forgotten about it?"

"*Mon Dieu!* since we made our agreement I haven't once read it. I did think, though, that the time wasn't so near; it's the fault of my wretched memory, but I'll manage in some way to pay you, although the business is in a sad state, and I have to pay more than fifteen thousand livres to different persons within three days."

He bowed again and went out, apparently exhausted by the effort it had cost him to carry on such an extended conversation.

As soon as they were alone the abbé cried:

"Surely, that man is a consummate knave! God forgive his hypocrisy! How could we have been deceived by him so long?"

"But are you sure of what you told us, father?" asked one of Madame Legrand's friends.

"I say nothing of the seventy-nine louis d'or that were stolen from me, although I told nobody but you and him that I had any such sum in my possession, and although that same day he made a false excuse for coming to my rooms during my absence. Theft is an infamous thing, but slander is no less infamous, and he has slandered you shamefully. Yes, he has spread broadcast the report that you, Madame Legrand, his former mistress and benefactress, tried to tempt his virtue. That is what is being whispered around about you all over the neighborhood, and may soon be said aloud; and we have all been so completely taken in by him, and have done so much to give him the reputation of an honest man, that

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it would be impossible for us to-day to destroy our work; it is quite possible that neither of us would be believed, I in accusing him of theft, and you of falsehood. But be on your guard; these shameful reports have not been circulated without a purpose. Now that your eyes are beginning to be opened, keep an eye on him."

"Yes," rejoined Madame Legrand, "and my brother-in-law warned me against him three years since. One day he said to my sister-in-law these words, which I remember perfectly: 'The business of a grocer-druggist suits me to perfection, because it enables one to take his revenge on an enemy; if you have a grudge against any one, it's an easy matter to get rid of him with the help of a prepared draught.' I paid no attention to advice or warnings, I even overcame the feeling of repugnance which I had when I first saw him; I welcomed his friendly overtures, and I greatly fear that I have every reason to repent it. But you know him as well as I do. Who would not believe in the sincerity of his piety? Who would not believe in it even now? In spite of what you tell me, I hesitate to be seriously distrustful of him; I cannot understand such perversity."

They continued to discuss the subject for some time, and then, as it was quite late, they separated.

Early the next morning a large and noisy crowd of bourgeois, and of men and women of the lower class, assembled in front of Derues' grocery on Rue Saint-Victor. There was a perfect bedlam of questions which did not await answers, and of answers not in reply to questions, a confused uproar, a hubbub of disconnected words, assertions, denials and interrupted narratives. At one point was a group listening to the words of a shirt-sleeved orator; at another the crowd were snarling and

wrangling; and here and there could be heard such exclamations as:

"Poor man! the dear boy! poor old Derues! *Bon Dieu!* what will he do now? Alas! he is totally ruined! we can only hope that his creditors will give him time."

Over all the uproar soared one voice, as shrill and penetrating as a cat's, describing with sobs and lamentation the terrible catastrophe that occurred during the night. About three in the morning, the denizens of Rue Saint-Victor were awakened with a start by cries of: "*Fire! fire!*"

Fire had broken out in Derues' cellar. They succeeded in checking it in season to save the house from total ruin, but all his stock in trade was destroyed. Derues suffered a considerable loss in bottles of oil, pipes of brandy, chests of soap, etc., and estimated it at no less than nine thousand livres.

What unlucky chance induced the fire to break out on his premises, he could not understand. He told of his call upon Madame Legrand during the evening.

"I shall die of vexation!" he cried with pale, dejected face, and hardly able to stand; "a poor, sick man like me! I am ruined! I am ruined!"

A hoarse voice interrupted his jeremiad, and the attention of the populace was drawn to a woman who carried a bundle of printed papers in her hand, and forced her way through the crowd up to the door of the shop. She unfolded one of her papers and shouted as loud and as distinctly as her rusty organ would permit:

"Condemnation, by the Parliament of Paris, of Jean Robert Cassel, accused and convicted of the crime of fraudulent bankruptcy!"

Derues raised his head and recognized a peddler, who

used to come to his shop to drink until about a month before this time, when he had a violent dispute with her as the result of some rascality that she detected him in and reproved him for in energetic language. He had not seen her since.

The crowd, and all the gossips of the neighborhood, who held the grocer in great veneration, looked upon the peddler's action as an indirect slur upon Derues' misfortune. They were on the point of making her pay dear for her irreverence, without ceremony; but she, with one hand on her hip, pushed the boldest of them aside with the other hand and said:

"Can it be that you people still believe in his tricks? Oh! it's true of course, that fire broke out in his cellar last night, and it's true that his creditors will be idiots enough not to force him to pay them. But perhaps you don't know that he hasn't lost the value of a sou."

"He's lost all his stock!" shouted voices on all sides. "More than nine thousand livres! How about the oil and the brandy? Don't you suppose that they burn? The old witch! she drinks enough to know! If you should hold a candle anywhere near her body it would take fire."

"That may be," retorted the peddler, waving her hand again, "but none of you had best come near enough to see. Never mind! that puny creature there is a rascal; for three nights he has been emptying his cellar and he left nothing there but old empty casks and chests with nothing inside. *Pardieu!* I used to swallow his fables like everyone else; but this morning I happen to know the truth. I tell you that he had his liquor taken away by Michel Lambourne's son, a cobbler on Rue de la Parcheminerie. Why! the man told me so himself!"

"I turned this woman out of my shop a month ago because she stole from me," said Derues.

Notwithstanding the way in which the accusation was turned against the accuser, the woman's assertion might perhaps have changed the feeling of the crowd, and thrown a little cold water on their enthusiasm, had not a stout man come out of the ranks at that moment and taken the peddler by the arm.

"Hold your lying tongue!" he said.

This man was a fellow-tradesman of Derues, whose admiration for that saintly person's uprightness knew no bounds. The grocer's honor was an article of faith with him; merely to imply a doubt of it was to insult him personally.

"My dear friend," he said, "we know what to think of you; I know you. Send to my shop to-morrow, and you shall have whatever goods you need on as long credit as you choose. What have you to say to that, you old hag?"

"Why, that you're as big a fool as the rest. Adieu, brother Derues; if you go on like this, my boy, I shall be selling your paper some day."

She forced her way through the crowd, making a sort of windmill of her right arm, and walked away, crying:

"Condemnation, by the Parliament of Paris, of Jean Robert Cassel, accused and convicted of the crime of fruadulent bankruptcy!"

This attack came from too low down in the social scale to injure Derues' reputation. However deep his resentment may have been at the moment, he soon forgot it in the face of the reiterated proofs of the deep interest in him which his neighbors and the whole quarter manifested apropos of his pretended ruin. The remembrance of the peddler soon faded away, otherwise she would

have paid for her temerity with her life. That woman, however, did in her drunken excitement prophesy truly; she put her finger on the grain of sand over which he was destined to stumble.

"All the passions," says La Bruyère, "all the passions are liars; they disguise themselves as much as they can in the eyes of others; they try to hide from themselves. There is no vice that has not a false resemblance to some virtue, and that does not take advantage of it."

Derues' whole life goes to prove the truth of this observation. The miser and poisoner deceived his victims by an affectation of fervent and exalted piety, and drew them into the trap where he murdered them silently. His ghastly celebrity did not begin until the double murder of Madame de Lamotte and her son in 1777; his name does not at once recall a long series of crimes, as do those of some other great culprits; but when one overhauls his obscure, low, tortuous existence, a stain is found at every step. It is probable that no one ever surpassed or even equaled him in dissimulation, hypocrisy and absolutely untiring perversity. Derues died at thirty-two; his whole life was given over to vice, and that life, which was happily a short one, was a tissue of criminal thoughts and deeds; its very essence was evil. For him there was no rest or respite, no hesitation or remorse. He was forced to lie and steal and poison. From time to time suspicion became rife, the public instinct was awakened, and vague rumors floated about his head; but he wrapped himself around with fresh impostures, and the sword did not fall. When he at last fell into the clutches of the law, his reputation protected him and for some time held back the blade which was all ready to strike. Hypocrisy was such an essential part of his nature, that when his last hope was gone,

when he was irrevocably condemned, and knew that he would deceive neither his fellow-men nor Him whom he insulted by this last sacrilege, he cried:

"O Christ! I am doomed to suffer as Thou didst!"

Not until the light of his funeral pyre fell upon them were the dark passages of his life made bright; not till then was the bloody panorama unrolled, so that his other forgotten victims, whose names were lost in the darkness, rose like spectres at the foot of the scaffold, and formed the poisoner's funeral procession.

Let us cast a hasty glance at his earlier years, which were forgotten in the horrible scandal and notoriety of his death. These few pages are not written for the glorification of crime. Although in our days, as a result of the corruption of morals and the deplorable confusion of all our notions of right and wrong, there has seemed to be a disposition to arouse public interest in crime, our only purpose in exposing it to the public gaze and placing it for a moment on a pedestal, is to cast it down from the higher level so that its fall may be as great as possible. What God has permitted to take place, man may venture to tell. Aged, *blasé* societies do not require to be treated as one treats a child; they have no claim to be dealt with tenderly or with extraordinary consideration, and it may be a very good thing for them to touch with their fingers and see with their eyes the most deadly wounds which afflict them. Why should one not tell what everyone knows? Why should one fear to sound the abyss of which everyone can measure the depth, and to bring forth villainy unmasked into the light of day, even though it may sustain the public exposure with unblushing effrontery? Consummate vice as well as consummate virtue is included in the scheme of Providence; and the poet summed up the undying

morality of all times and all nations in that sublime line: *Abstulit hunc tandem Rufini pœna tumultum.*

Moreover—we feel that we cannot be too careful that our purpose be not misunderstood—if we had desired to arouse any other sentiment than that of horror, we might have selected some vastly more imposing subject in the annals of crime. There are crimes which require courage, a certain sort of greatness and spurious heroism; there are criminals who hold the regular, legitimate forces of society in abeyance, and whom one cannot contemplate without a feeling of terror, mingled, it may be, with pity. But here there is nothing of the sort; not a trace of courage, simply revolting avarice, which tries its hand at first in pilfering a few paltry coppers from the poor; the illicit gains and the petty swindling of a rascally shopkeeper and a detestable usurer; cowardly villainy, which dares not strike face to face, but murders in the dark. It is the history of an unclean reptile which crawls along underground paths and leaves its poisoned slaver wherever it goes.

Such is the man of whose life we have undertaken to tell the story, a man who was one of the most perfect types of depravity, and who realized the most hideous imaginings of poet or novelist. Deeds which are unimportant when taken by themselves, and would seem puerile if done by another, catch the reflection of other deeds which preceded and followed them, and can no longer be passed over in silence. It is the chronicler's duty to collect them and set them down as steps in the development of that degraded soul; to bind them together in a bundle and count the rounds in the ladder of crime which the criminal mounted one after another.

We have described the first exploit of the child Derues, showing that he was by instinct an assassin; we

have seen him twenty years later in the character of incendiary and dishonest bankrupt with malice aforethought. What was he doing in the interval? With what rascality and what crimes did he fill in those twenty years? Let us go back for a moment to his childhood.

His insurmountable propensity to theft led to his being turned out of doors by the relatives who undertook to rear him. An anecdote is told of him which displays his impudence and his incorrigible perverseness. One day his cousins surprised him stealing money, and chastised him severely. When they had beaten him to their hearts' content the child, instead of exhibiting any regret and asking forgiveness, slipped out of their hands with a sneering laugh, apparently insensible to the blows he had received; and when he saw that they were out of breath, he cried:

"You're all tired out. Just look at me! I'm not."

Despairing of their ability to mend his natural badness, these cousins washed their hands of him and sent him to Chartres, where two female cousins consented to receive him as an act of charity. The simple souls, in the innocence and sincerity of their pious hearts, thought that a good example and thorough religious instruction would have a beneficial influence upon their young kinsman. The result, however, was not in accordance with their expectations. Derues learned while with them to be a rascal and a hypocrite, and to assume a mask of respectability. That was the only profit he derived from their lessons.

There also his repeated thefts drew down severe chastisement upon him. Knowing the extreme economy, not to say avarice, of his cousins, he made sport of them when the laths that they used to punish him with broke over his shoulders.

"I'm glad of it," he would say, "it will cost you two farthings."

The patience of his benefactresses was exhausted at last; he left their house, and entered the employ of a tinsmith at Chartres as an apprentice. His master died, and an ironmonger in the same city took him as a boy in the foundry; after that he went to live with a grocer-druggist. Up to that time, although he was then fifteen years old, he had manifested no inclination for one trade rather than another, but it became necessary for him to settle down at some occupation. His share of his father's and mother's property amounted only to the modest sum of thirty-five hundred livres. His sojourn with his last master developed a decided vocation in him, but it was as always in an evil direction. As he passed his time in the midst of a collection of drugs, which are beneficial or injurious according to the use to which they are put, the poisoner inhaled the odor of poison. He would undoubtedly have established himself at Chartres, had he not been compelled to leave the city by the discovery of further thefts. The trade of grocer-druggist being one of those which seemed to offer most chances of success, and being furthermore exactly to his taste, his family provided the necessary funds to apprentice him to a grocer on Rue Comtesse d'Artois.

Derues arrived in Paris in 1760. It was a new field, where he was not known and where he felt at his ease. He was no longer an object of suspicion. Lost in the crowd and uproar of that vast repository of all the vices, he had ample leisure to lay a foundation of hypocrisy upon which to build the reputation of an upright man. His master proposed, after his apprenticeship expired, to procure him a place in the grocery of his sister-in-law on Rue Saint-Victor. He spoke to her of him in

high terms as a youth whose zeal and shrewdness would be very useful in her business; she had been several years a widow. This plan, however, came near not being carried out. His master was ignorant, it is true, of the pilfering of which Derues was guilty, and which he was cunning enough to throw upon others. But one day he forgot his customary prudence and dissimulation, and allowed himself to make the remark we quoted above to his master's wife. She was naturally horrified at such talk: she ordered him to hold his tongue, and threatened to have her husband dismiss him.

He felt that his only way to remove this unfavorable impression was to be more hypocritical than ever. His patron's sister-in-law was strongly prepossessed in his favor. It had cost him little to win her confidence. Every day he offered his services to accommodate her; every evening he carried for her in a basket what goods she needed from Rue Comtesse d'Artois, and it was pitiful to see the youth with his weak constitution, panting and perspiring under the heavy burdens, declining to accept any recompense, because he was actuated only by kindness of heart and a desire to oblige.

The poor widow, whose spoils he already had his eye upon, was completely duped by him. She turned a deaf ear to her brother-in-law's advice, and listened only to the chorus of praise sent up by the neighbors of both sexes, who were highly edified by his conduct, and deeply touched by his interest in her. He had often had occasion to speak of her, and he had never done so except with the most earnest expressions of unlimited devotion. The young man's remarks concerning the widow were invariably reported to her, and they seemed to her the more sincere in that they were revealed to her

by chance, and she did not attribute them to artful design on his part.

Derues carried his rascality as far as possible, but he was careful to stop short of the point at which it would arouse suspicion. Being always intent upon deceiving or injuring somebody, he was never taken unawares. Like the insect which surrounds itself with the meshes of its web, he enveloped himself in a net-work of falsehoods which had to be unwrapped before his real thoughts could be got at. The cruel destiny of this woman, who was the mother of four children, decreed that she should take him into her shop as clerk during the year 1767. She thereby pronounced her own doom.

Derues began his term of service for his new mistress with a brilliant stroke. Nothing but his exemplary piety was talked about in the Quartier Saint-Victor. His first care was to ask the widow to recommend him a confessor. She sent him to the confessor of her late husband, Père Cartault, a Camelite monk. He was so impressed by his penitent's devoutness that he never failed, when he was passing, to step into the shop and congratulate Madame Legrand on the valuable acquisition she had made in the person of the young man, who would assuredly call down heaven's blessing upon her establishment.

Derues affected the greatest modesty, and blushed deep at these eulogiums. Often indeed, when he saw Père Cartault coming in the distance, he would pretend that he had not seen him, and invent some errand to take him away from the shop so as to leave his gullible panegyrist a clear field.

But Père Cartault seemed to Derues to be too indulgent. He was afraid, he said, that in his excessive leniency he pardoned his sins too readily, and he dared not be content with absolution that was never refused.

And so before the year expired, he chose another confessor, Père Denys, a Cordelier. He consulted them alternately, and submitted to them the things that weighed upon his conscience. Whatever penances they inflicted seemed to him too light, and he reinforced the most severe behests of his spiritual directors by constant mortification of the flesh. Tartuffe would have confessed himself outdone. He made a practice of wearing two cere-cloths to which were attached relics of Madame de Chautal, and a medallion of Saint François de Sales. Sometimes also he castigated himself.

His mistress told how he begged her to hire a pew at the Church of Saint-Nicolas so that he might more conveniently attend divine service on the days when he was at liberty. He even handed her a small sum of money he had laid by, to pay half of the expense. He lay on a straw pallet during the whole of one Lenten season, and cleverly managed to have that fact made known by Madame Legrand's servant-girl, by pretending in the first place to conceal it from her, as if he had been guilty of some shameful deed. He took measures to prevent her entering his room, and when she did find out the truth, forbade her to mention it, in such a way as to make her eager to do so. Such a signal proof of piety combined with a praiseworthy modesty, which took fright at the thought of its being known, could but augment the favorable opinion that people had of him.

Every day that passed was signalized by some new piece of hypocrisy. One of his sisters, who was a novice at the Convent of the Visitation of Sainte-Marie,* was to take the veil during the Easter-holidays. Derues asked his mistress' permission to attend the ceremony, and

* He had another sister at the same convent, who had taken the veil some five or six years before.

resolved to set out on foot on Good Friday. When he left the shop, it was full of people, and the gossips of the neighborhood inquired the purpose of his journey. Madame Legrand urged him to eat his breakfast and drink a glass of cordial (he never drank wine) before he started.

"Do you think I would do such a thing, Madame?" he cried; "what! breakfast on such a day as this, the day when Jesus Christ was crucified! I shall take a bit of bread with me, but I shall not touch it until this evening when I reach the inn where I mean to pass the night, for it is my purpose to make the journey fasting."

Nor was that enough for him. He was only awaiting an opportunity to establish his reputation for honesty on as firm a foundation as his reputation for piety. Chance furnished the opportunity, and he accepted it unhesitatingly although the accusation that he contemplated making would involve a member of his own family.

One of his brothers, the keeper of a wine shop at Chartres, came to see him. Derues, upon the pretext of desiring to show him the sights of Paris, where he was a perfect stranger, requested his mistress to allow him to take him into his room for a day or two, and she gave her consent. The day before his brother was to take his leave Derues went up to his room, broke the lock of the trunk in which were all his clothes, pulled over all that it contained, rummaged among the clothes, and found there two new cotton night-caps. He called, and the inmates of the house came to see what the trouble was. At that moment his brother came in; he accosted him as a vile thief, and accused him of having taken the money to buy the caps from Madame Legrand's cash-box the night before. The brother cried out against the charge and protested his innocence. Naturally indignant at this

perfidious conduct which he could not explain, he undertook to place the villainy where it belonged, and to recall certain unsavory incidents of Antoine's boyhood; but that worthy closed his mouth by asserting upon his honor that he saw him at an hour which he named, on the preceding night, sidle up to the cash-box, slip his hand furtively therein and abstract the money. The other was confounded and struck dumb by such a barefaced falsehood; he stammered out a few confused words and allowed himself to be turned out of the house. As a fitting climax to this iniquitous transaction Derues compelled the widow to allow him to make good the money that was stolen. It cost him three francs twelve sous, but that sum paid for impunity for his own pilfering. That evening he prayed fervently to God to forgive his brother.

All his schemes were successful, and brought him nearer and nearer to the result at which he aimed. No one in the quarter would have dreamed of doubting the word of the saintly man. His bland manners and his insinuating language varied according to the people with whom he conversed. He could adopt any tone he chose, and he was careful to run counter to nobody's opinions. He was harsh to no one but himself, and flattered the foibles of everyone else. In the numerous houses where he was made welcome his conversation was grave and serious, and abounded in long, stilted sentences. We have seen that at need he made use of sacred texts like a born theologian. In the shop, when he had dealings with the lower classes, he showed his familiarity with their modes of expression and talked the jargon of the market women, which he learned when he was serving his apprenticeship on Rue Comtesse d'Artois; he submitted to be treated familiarly by them, and they

commonly called him "my gossip Derues." He was confessedly an expert in accommodating himself to the peculiarities of the different people he came in contact with.

Meanwhile Père Cartault's prophecy was not fulfilled, and the blessing of heaven was a long way from descending upon Madame Legrand's establishment. Disaster followed disaster and Derues' zeal and conscientious devotion to his duties as manager of the shop could neither prevent nor repair them. He did not limit himself to a mere parade of hypocrisy, in which there was no profit for him, and his most outrageous impositions were not those which he performed in the bright light of day. Derues never slept at night. His extraordinary constitution, which was not governed by any of the ordinary rules, was unacquainted with the need of sleep. He passed his nights groping his way about, opening doors noiselessly with the address of an expert burglar, pillaging the shop and the cellar, and then he would visit distant quarters of the city under a false name, and dispose of what he had stolen.

It is hard to understand how his strength was sufficient to enable him to lead this double existence. But he lived to do evil, and the genius of evil took the place of the physical strength he lacked. The money—it was his unbridled passion for money, the only passion he ever experienced, that brought him by degrees to his point of departure, crime—he put out of sight in hiding places which he dug with his nails in the walls. As soon as he had it in his grasp he would carry it there as a wild beast would carry a mass of bleeding flesh to its lair, and often he would kneel in adoration before his scandalous idol, while his eyes gleamed with a fierce joy, and his lips were parted by a smile like that of the

hyena gloating over its prey, and would gaze at the gold by the flickering light of a lantern, and count it over and over again, and kiss it.

His continual thieving threw Madame Legrand's business into confusion, destroyed all her profit, and slowly paved the way for her ruin. She had no suspicion of his shameful manœuvres, and Derues cast the blame upon ignoble accomplices, quite worthy of him. Sometimes a bottle of oil or brandy would be spilled, at other times some other commodity would be injured or spoiled; Derues attributed everything to the enormous quantity of rats, with which the cellar and the whole house were swarming. At last, being unable to meet her obligations, Madame Legrand made over her business to him in February, 1770. He was then about twenty-five years and a half; he was received as a member of the grocers' company in August following.

By an agreement made in duplicate Derues bound himself to give her a bonus of twelve hundred livres and to provide her with lodging gratis during the remainder of the term of her lease, which had nine years to run.

Madame Legrand, being compelled to go out of business to avoid insolvency, gave up all the goods she had left in her shop to her creditors. Derues made arrangements with them by which he procured them all at a bargain.

The first step was taken; under the shelter of his fraudulent reputation, he could go on and steal and enrich himself with perfect impunity.

One of his uncles, a corn-merchant at Chartres, was in the habit of coming to Paris every six months to settle his accounts with his correspondents. A sum of twelve hundred francs, which he had locked up in his bureau, was stolen. Accompanied by his nephew he went before

the magistrate and lodged a complaint. A search was made and it was found that the bottom of the bureau was broken. As was the case when the abbé's seventy-nine louis were stolen, nobody but Derues had entered his uncle's chamber. The inn-keeper swore that it was so, but the uncle took pains to assert his belief in his nephew's innocence, and not long after allowed his confidence in him to carry him so far as to become his surety for five thousand francs. Derues did not pay the note when it fell due, and the holder was obliged to sue the surety.

Any method, no matter how impudent, of appropriating the property of another, was agreeable to him. One day a grocer in the provinces sent him a thousand pounds of honey in casks to sell for his account. Two or three months passed, and the consignor wrote for information concerning his goods. Derues replied that he had not yet been able to dispose of them to advantage. After another considerable interval the inquiry was repeated and met with the same response. At last, after more than a year of waiting, the grocer came to Paris. He called upon Derues, inspected his barrels, and discovered that five hundred pounds of honey were missing. He demanded their value of the consignee, who declared that what he had on hand comprised the whole consignment, and as the shipment was made on trust without any writing of any kind, the provincial dealer could not obtain restitution.

Derues was not content to have built his own fortunes on the ruin of Madame Legrand and her four children; he coveted also the crust of bread he was obliged to leave her. A few days after the fire in his cellar, which furnished him with the means of becoming insolvent a second time, his former mistress, being at last undeceived,

and putting no faith in his complaints, demanded the money to which she was entitled under their agreement. Derues made a pretence of searching for his copy of the agreement, but did not find it.

"Give me yours, Madame Legrand," he said, "so that we may write the receipt upon it; here's the money."

The widow opened the portfolio and took out the paper, which Derues at once snatched from her hand and tore to bits.

"Now you are paid," he cried; "I owe you nothing. I will make oath to it in court whenever you please, and I shall be believed."

"Wretch," said the poor widow, "may God forgive your soul, but Montfaucon will have your body."

Madame Legrand made no secret of this outrageous piece of rascality; but Derues was beforehand with her, and the slander he had sown bore fruit. People said that his former mistress wished to ruin his reputation by a hateful lie because he had refused to be her lover. Although reduced to poverty, she left the house, where she was lodged for nothing, preferring the hardest and most wretched life to the torture of remaining under the same roof with the author of her ruin.

We might cite a thousand more instances of knavery; but it must not be thought that after beginning with murder, Derues had retrograded so far as to stop at theft thereafter. Two fraudulent bankruptcies would have filled the measure of another's ambition, but they were merely pastime for him. To this period of his life belong two lurid, obscure transactions, two crimes with which his memory is laden, two victims whose death-cry was overheard by no one.

The hypocrite's reputation for godliness extended beyond the walls of Paris. A young man from the

country, who proposed to start in business as a grocer in the capital, was advised to apply to Derues for all necessary information, and to be guided by his advice. He called upon him, and placed in his hands his capital of eight thousand livres, begging him to assist him to find a suitable opening. To show Derues the glitter of gold was to awaken all his criminal instincts. The voices of the witches who cried to Macbeth: "Thou shalt be king!" did not stir the soul of the ambitious Thane more profoundly than the sight of gold aroused the avarice of Derues. His hands closed upon those eight thousand livres, never to open again. He received them as a deposit, he laid them away beside the avails of his other thefts, and he swore that he would never give them up.

Several days had passed, when Derues returned home one afternoon with a joyous expression which was seldom seen upon his face.

"Have you good news for me?" the young man asked him, "or have you done a good stroke of business for yourself?"

"My dear fellow," Derues replied, "I had an opportunity to make myself a rich man; fortune smiled upon me; but I promised to serve you, your people had confidence in me, and I will prove that it was well placed. I found a shop for sale with the stock and good will in one of the best quarters of Paris. You can buy it for twelve thousand livres, and it's an excellent bargain. I might loan you the money you lack, but you'd best write to your father; urge him strenuously not to let slip so good a chance; he will thank me later."

The father and mother were prevailed upon by their son's insistence to send a further sum of four thousand livres, begging Derues to hasten the conclusion of the bargain.

Three weeks later, the father came to Paris in great anxiety, as he had heard nothing further from his son. Derues received him with the most profound surprise, having no doubt, he said, that the young man had returned to his family. He told him that one day he had received a letter to the effect that his father no longer wanted him to start in business in Paris, and had arranged an advantageous marriage for him in the country; whereupon he started off with the twelve thousand livres, for which Derues showed his receipt.

The fact was that one day just at dusk Derues went out with his guest, who complained of a heavy feeling in his head and pains in his stomach. Where did they go? No one knew; but the next morning, just before daybreak, Derues returned, tired out and alone.

From that time nothing more was heard of the young provincial.

One of his apprentices was forever being reproved by him. He charged him with negligence, with wasting time, and with taking three hours to do an errand when a fourth of that time would have been ample. When he had succeeded in convincing the boy's father, a Paris tradesman, that his son, notwithstanding his protestations of innocence, was a worthless vagabond, he called upon him one day in a state of intense excitement.

"Your son," he said, "ran away yesterday with six hundred livres that he stole from me. He saw where I put the money, which I intended to use to pay a note to-day."

He threatened to lodge a complaint with a police magistrate, and denounce the thief, and was not appeased until he had received the sum that was stolen from him.

The night before, he went out with his apprentice and returned in the morning alone.

Meanwhile the veil which concealed the truth was becoming day by day more transparent. Three bankruptcies had lessened the consideration he enjoyed, and people began to lend an ear to complaints and accusations which they formerly treated as fables invented to destroy him. The result of one more swindling exploit impressed upon him the necessity of changing his surroundings.

He hired a house near his own, including a shop which had been occupied for seven or eight years by a dealer in wines. He demanded that he pay him six hundred livres, by way of bonus, if he wished to retain his establishment. Although it seemed an exorbitant sum, the wine-merchant, after due reflection, preferred to make the sacrifice rather than remove his business, especially as he had built up a good trade, and was well thought of.

It was not long before a more audacious piece of rascality gave him a chance to take his revenge. He had a boarder, a young man of good family, who wished to become familiar with the business. This young man went one day to Derues' shop to make some purchases, and amused himself, while he was being served, by writing his name on a piece of blank paper which lay on the counter, and carelessly left it lying there. As soon as he left the shop, Derues, who knew that he was rich, wrote over the signature a note for two thousand livres to his own order, payable when the signatory attained his majority. This note he used in his business, and when it matured it was presented to the wine-merchant, who was surprised beyond measure. He called his boarder and showed him the paper with his signature. The young man was dumfounded at the sight of the note, of which he had no knowledge

whatever; and yet he could not deny that it was his signature. They scrutinized the body of the note with care, and recognized Derues' handwriting. The wine-merchant sent for him, and when he came, took him into a bed-room, closed the door upon him, and confronted him with the note. He confessed that he wrote it, and tried various falsehoods to justify himself. But they would listen to none of them, and threatened to lay the note before a magistrate. Thereupon Derues wept and pleaded, fell on his knees, admitted his guilt, and begged for mercy. He agreed to restore the six hundred livres bonus he had extorted, and succeeded in inducing them to tear up the note in his presence, and to consent to let the matter rest there. He was on the verge of matrimony, and feared the effect of an open scandal.

A short time after he married Marie Louise Nicolaïs, daughter of a harness-maker of Melun.

Is not one's first impression at the thought of this marriage, one of profound sadness and of harrowing compassion for the poor girl whose destiny was linked to this monster's? What a horrible future do we not prefigure for her! youth and innocence tainted by the impure breath of homicide, candor united to hypocrisy, virtue to villainy, legitimate desires to shameful passions, moral purity to moral gangrene! One's very nature revolts at the thought of such shocking contrasts, and we are moved to pity such a fate. But let us not be in too great haste. Derues' wife was never convicted of taking an active part in his later crimes, but her history, which is inextricably mingled with her husband's, shows no trace of suffering or of revolt against complicity in his ghastly deeds; the testimony with regard to her is uncertain, the voice of the people will judge her hereafter.

In 1773 Derues abandoned the retail trade, and left the Quartier Saint Victor; he took up his abode in a house on Rue des Deux Boules near Rue Bertin-Poirée in the parish of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, where he was married. After acting as agent for the Camaldule fathers of the forest of Sénart, who had heard of him as a man of exemplary piety, and taking a turn at money-lending, he undertook what is called *affaires*, a profession which is perfectly certain to become lucrative in the hands of a man with his unexceptionable morals and honest exterior. And indeed, there was nothing that could be laid to his charge. It was a much simpler matter for him to impose on his clients, because he was addicted to none of the vices which bring families to ruin—gaming, wine or women. Up to this time he had had but one passion, money; but the seeds of another were germinating—ambition. He bought houses and lands, and when the purchase money came due, compelled his vendors to sue for it. He also bought law-suits which he succeeded in throwing into confusion with the astuteness of a pettifogging attorney. Being himself an experienced bankrupt, he undertook to arrange failures, and to impart to bad faith the aspect of probity fallen upon evil days. If the man did not touch poison he plunged his hands in every sort of social ordure; he could not breathe and live in any other than a foul atmosphere.*

*Before going out of business he purchased a house at Chaulnes and furnished it, and made several trips thither. The proprietor had all the trouble in the world to procure his money.

Some time after he bought a house at Rueil. The deeds were executed before a notary on Rue Saint-Martin. When he took possession of the house he gave the vendor to understand that he had reserved a room therein for him, and urged him earnestly to occupy it. Happily for him, however, he was unable to take advantage of the offer. If he had done so, it would undoubtedly have cost him his life. As Derues did not pay, the vendor sued him, and it cost him a thousand crowns to get his house back.

His wife, who had already presented him with a daughter, bore a son to him in February, 1774. Derues, in order to support the grand airs and the title of "seigneur" which he had assumed, prevailed upon certain persons of high station to act as sponsors for the child. We quote the certificate of baptism word for word, because of its curious phraseology:

"Antoine Maximilien Joseph, son of Messire Antoine François DERUES, Seigneur de Gendeville, Herchiès, Viquemont, and other places, formerly grocer, and of Dame Marie Louise NICOLAIS, his wife. Godfathers, T. H. and T. P., Seigneurs, etc.; godmother, Dame M. Fr. C. D. V., etc.

Signed, A. F. DERUES, *senior*."

All these dignities did not place Derues out of reach of the officers of the law. He played to the end, however, his rôle of lord of the parish, treated them insolently and showered insults upon them when they came to his house to distrain. This scandalous proceeding aroused the curiosity of his neighbors on several occasions, and their comments upon it were not complimentary to him. His landlord, weary of the continual gossip and especially of never being able to collect his rent without obtaining judgment therefor, gave him notice to quit. Derues thereupon took up his quarters on Rue Beaubourg, under the name of Cyrano Derues de Bury, and continued to act as agent.

And now let us cease to busy ourselves in unraveling this tangle of impostures; let us no longer wander about in this labyrinth of fraud, of low, vile intrigue, of obscure crimes, the thread of which breaks off in the darkness, and all traces disappear in a slimy mixture of blood and filth; let us listen no more to the weeping

of an impoverished widow and her four small children, to the groans of obscure victims, to the shrieks of terror, and the death rattle, which rang out one night under the arches of a chateau near Beauvais.* Here are other victims whose shrieks are more piercing; here are fresh crimes, and retribution as noteworthy as the crimes. Let all the nameless shades, the mute spectres fade away before the bright light which breaks at last, and give place to these other shades which wave their shrouds and come forth from the tomb demanding vengeance.

An opportunity was afforded Derues to achieve immortality. Hitherto all his blows had been dealt at random; from this time on he brought into play all the resources of his infernal imagination; he concentrated his efforts upon one well-defined object, and conceived and executed his masterpiece of villainy. For two years he employed all his art as knave and forger and poisoner, in weaving the net which was to ensnare an entire family, while he himself, caught in his own trap, struggled in vain to gnaw away the meshes which held him. The foot which he placed upon the last round of the ladder of crime touched also the first step of the scaffold.

A fourth of a league beyond Villeneuve-le-Roi-lez-Sens, there stood in 1775, a handsome house, overlooking on one side the river Yonne, and on the other a garden

*Derues was strongly suspected of having murdered Monsieur Despeignes-Duplessis. He was never required to answer fully concerning this murder, for which he was not tried. I gleaned from several persons the rumors which were in circulation at the time of the examination, and which found few contradictors or unbelievers when his past life was brought to light.

One night three masked men broke into Monsieur Despeignes' chateau, and stabbed him to death with a knife. After the deed was done the three men joined the one who hired them to do it, at a place agreed upon. They received money from him and all supped together. It was claimed that the three were all poisoned at the supper, as were the two porters whom Derues employed at a later period to carry the trunk containing Madame de Lamotte's body to Monsieur Mouchy's.

and park belonging to the seignorial estate of Buisson-Sonef. It was an extensive domain, admirably situated, comprising arable land, woodland and water; but it was not all equally well cared for, and its appearance indicated some slight financial stringency on the part of its owner. For some years the repairs and improvements had been confined almost exclusively to the dwelling-house and its immediate surroundings. Here and there were dilapidated walls threatening to fall; enormous growths of ivy had checked the growth of vigorous trees, and in the most distant part of the park the paths were so overrun with briers that it was impossible to pass. There was no lack of charm in this lack of order, and in those days when the gardener's art was limited to laying out straight paths and confining nature within the cold and monotonous bounds of absolute symmetry, the eye rested with a grateful feeling of relief upon the unsymmetrical clumps of trees, upon the streams which had broken out other beds than those in which they once flowed, and upon the innumerable unexpected bits of picturesque landscape.

A broad terrace, from which the winding course of the river could be followed for a long distance, extended the whole length of the river front of the house. Three men were walking there, two clergymen and M. de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, proprietor of Buisson-Sonef. One of the clergymen was the curate of Villeneuve-le-Roi-lez-Sens, and the other, one of the community of Camaldule fathers, who had come to visit the curate on some church business, and to pass a few days at the parsonage.

Conversation was almost at a standstill between these three. From time to time M. de Lamotte would halt, and shading his eyes with his hand from the glaring reflection of the sun on the water and the level fields,

would gaze earnestly in quest of some new object on the horizon; then with an impatient, anxious gesture he would resume his slow promenade.

The clock of the chateau rang sharply out.

"Six o'clock already!" he cried. "Well, they won't come to-day either."

"Why do you despair?" said the curate. "Your servant went to meet them. The boat may come in sight any moment."

"But, father," M. de Lamotte replied, "these are not the longest days of the year; in another hour it will be dusk, and they won't venture on the river."

"Well! suppose that to be so; it's only a matter of a little patience; they will pass the night in a safe place only two leagues away, and you will see them in the morning."

"My brother is right," said the other ecclesiastic; "so set your mind at rest, Monsieur."

"You both speak of it very unconcernedly, as of something you know nothing about."

"What do you say?" rejoined the curate; "do you think, because our holy calling condemns us to remain unmarried, that we cannot comprehend an affection like yours, which I myself blessed and legitimized, you remember, fifteen years since?"

"You may have a purpose, father, in reminding me of the date of our wedding. I freely admit that your love for your neighbor gives you some light as to another sort of love of which you have known nothing; and I agree, too, that it may well seem strange to you that a man of my age should take alarm at so small a matter, as a lad might do. But what would you have? I am growing superstitious, and I have been having presentiments of late."

Here he stopped again, and again looked toward the river, but seeing nothing, he resumed his place between the two clergymen.

"Yes," he said, "I have presentiments that I cannot shake off. I am not so old that age has enfeebled my faculties and made a dotard of me; I don't know what I am afraid of, but the briefest separation is a grief to me, and causes me involuntary terror. Isn't it strange? Formerly I was away from my wife for months together; she was young then, and my son in his cradle, and yet I never was low-spirited about leaving her. Why is it not the same now? Why do a simple business trip to Paris and a few hours' delay disturb me in this way? You remember, father," he continued after a pause, addressing the curate, "how pretty Marie was on our wedding-day? How fresh and rosy! and how her face glowed with innocence and candor! Ah! her appearance that day was not deceitful! she is the purest, whitest soul that ever lived. That is why I love her now, when we no longer sigh for one another; and this second love is better than the first; it has its store of memories, and furthermore, it is tranquil and trustful like friendship. It's strange that they don't come; some accident must have happened to them. If I don't see them this evening, and I have no hope of it now, I shall go myself in the morning."

"*Bon Dieu!*" exclaimed the monk, "you must have been a perfect firebrand of impatience at twenty, to have retained so much of it until now! Come, be calm, Monsieur, and have patience; you must agree yourself that it's simply a delay of a few hours at the worst."

"But you see my son is with his mother, and the boy's health is so delicate! We have only him now; he's the last of three, and you don't know what a wealth of

affection a father and mother who are growing old can concentrate upon a single head. If I were to lose Edouard, I should surely die."

"If you consented to part with him, his presence in Paris must have been necessary."

"No; his mother went there to arrange for a loan which I need in order to undertake some essential improvements upon the estate."

"Why did you let him go then?"

"I would have liked to keep him with me, but his mother was anxious to take him; it is as hard for one as for the other to be away from him, and we almost quarreled about it. I yielded."

"There was a way of accommodating all three of you; I mean, to take the trip together."

"Yes, but Monsieur le Curé will tell you that for a fortnight I was tied to my armchair, swearing below my breath like a veritable pagan, and cursing the sins of my youth. But I beg your pardon, father; I was on the point of accusing myself of having the gout; I forgot that I am not the only one here, and that it afflicts the declining years of the virtuous man as well as of the courtier."

A fresh breeze, such as commonly precedes the sinking of the sun below the horizon, rustled among the leaves; dark shadows stretched across the Yonne from bank to bank, and reached out into the fields; the water, slightly wrinkled, reflected confusedly the objects on its banks, and the darkened blue of the sky. The three promenaders stopped at the end of the terrace and gazed off into the distance. A black spot, which they espied in the middle of the river, assumed for an instant the appearance of a boat as it passed across a light streak, where a low plain lay between two little hills; then it

vanished and could not be distinguished from the water. An instant later it appeared again more distinctly than before; it was, in fact, a boat, and they could see the horse on the bank, drawing it along against the current. It reached a point where the river made a turn at a clump of willows; and they had to wait for a few moments in uncertainty. But a white handkerchief fluttering at the bow when it came in sight again, caused M. de Lamotte to utter a joyful exclamation.

"It's they!" he cried, "there they are! Do you see them, Monsieur le Curé? I know my son! it is he waving the handkerchief; his mother is sitting beside him. But it seems to me that there is somebody else with them. Yes, there is, isn't there? a man! Look!"

"Yes," replied the curate; "if my wretched eyes don't deceive me, I see someone sitting by the tiller; it looks like a child."

"It's some neighbor, no doubt, who seized the chance to make the journey without fatigue."

While they were discussing the question the boat came rapidly nearer, and they could hear the crack of the whip wherewith the servant stimulated the zeal of his steed. At last it arrived at a spot some fifty paces from the terrace, where there was a good landing place. Madame de Lamotte stepped ashore with her son and the stranger. M. de Lamotte left the terrace to go and meet them, but long before he reached the gate of the enclosure his son's arms were around his neck.

"Are you well, Edouard?"

"Perfectly."

"And your mother?".

"She is the same. She is coming after me; but although she's in as great a hurry as I to kiss you, you

will have to go half-way to meet her, for she can't run so fast."

"Have you brought someone with you?"

"A gentleman from Paris."

"From Paris?"

"Yes, M. Derues. Mamma will tell you all about it. See! there she is!"

The curate and his fellow-ecclesiastic came up just as M. de Lamotte pressed his wife in his arms. Although she had reached her fortieth year the beauty that she still possessed fully justified her husband's enthusiasm. A slight stoutness, which is becoming at that age, had preserved the bloom and softness of her skin; her smile was still charming, and her great blue eyes had a penetrating mildness and an expression of unbounded kindliness. Beside her smiling, tranquil countenance, the features of the stranger were repellent in the extreme. M. de Lamotte could not entirely restrain a gesture of disagreeable surprise at sight of the vulgar, cringing wretch, the poor apology for a man, who stood apart like a pauper ashamed of his poverty. His surprise was greatly augmented when he saw his son take him cordially by the hand, and heard him say:

"Come with me, my dear friend. Let us follow my father and mother."

Madame de Lamotte, having greeted the curate, looked inquiringly at the monk, whom she did not know. A word of explanation sufficed to enlighten her. She took her husband's arm, and on their way to the house, she laughingly refused to reply to his questions, and rallied him upon his curiosity.

Pierre Étienne de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, *écuyer de la grande écurie du roi*, Sieur de Grange-Flandre, Valperfond, etc., married in 1760, Marie Françoise Perrier.

Their fortune resembled many fortunes of that period; it was more theoretical than real, and existed on paper rather than in fact. Not that the husband and wife had any reason to complain of each other, or that their patrimony had suffered from their extravagance. On the contrary in that age of corrupt morals, their life was always a model of sincere attachment, of the domestic virtues and of mutual confidence. Marie Françoise was sufficiently attractive to make a success in society; she voluntarily renounced it to devote herself entirely to the fulfilment of her duties as wife and mother. The only serious grief they had known was the loss of two young children in quick succession. The oldest, Edouard, although sickly at his birth, passed successfully through the trying years of childhood and early youth; he was at this time about fourteen. His sweet, somewhat effeminate face, his blue eyes and his smile made him strikingly like his mother. His father's affection exaggerated the dangers which threatened his days; in his eyes the least indisposition assumed the character of a serious illness; his wife shared his fears, and as a result of their excessive anxiety Edouard's education was neglected. He was brought up at Buisson-Sonef, where he was free to play from morning till night, like a young fawn testing the strength and flexibility of its limbs. At fourteen he was as innocent and ignorant as a child of eight or ten.

The principal cause of the embarrassing condition of M. de Lamotte's finances was the necessity he was under of appearing at court and while there maintaining such an establishment as his office demanded. For some years past he had lived in almost absolute seclusion at Buisson-Sonef, but notwithstanding the tardy application of method and economy in the management of his affairs,

he was on the verge of ruin. The estate required too considerable an outlay, and absorbed without result the greater part of his income, he had always shrunk from disposing of it because of the memories that clustered about it; there he had known, loved and married Marie Françoise Perrier, there the bright days of their youth had been passed. They were equally desirous to pass their declining years under the same roof.

Such was the family into which chance had afforded Derues an opportunity of introducing himself.

He was quick to perceive the unfavorable impression he had produced upon M. de Lamotte. He was accustomed to the instinctive repugnance which the first sight of him always aroused, and one of his most remarkable achievements was his success in overcoming it gradually and substituting confidence for it; but the methods he employed varied according to the persons whom he wished to deceive. He realized that with such a man as M. de Lamotte, whose face and manners indicated familiarity with the world and intellectual acumen, mere vulgar imposture would injure rather than help him; but at the same time he had to take into account the two churchmen, who were also scrutinizing him. Fearful of compromising himself he adopted the most modest bearing and the most unmeaning expression of which he was capable, knowing that sooner or later a third person would volunteer to set him right in the minds of these critical observers. He had not long to wait.

When they reached the salon, M. de Lamotte invited him as well as the others to be seated.

Derues bowed without replying at first. There was a moment of silence, during which Edouard and his mother exchanged glances, laughing both. At last Madame de Lamotte began:

"My dear, you are naturally astonished at monsieur's presence; but when you know what he has done for us, you will thank me for having persuaded him to accompany us."

"Allow me," Derues interposed, "allow me, monsieur, to tell you myself. The gratitude that madame thinks she owes me leads her to exaggerate the value of a service which anybody in my place would have been eager to render her."

"No, monsieur, let me speak."

"Let mamma speak, my friend," said Edouard.

"But what is it, pray? what has happened?" exclaimed M. de Lamotte.

"I am really embarrassed," said Derues. "I obey you, madame."

"Yes," rejoined Madame de Lamotte, "do you remain on the stool of repentance; I wish you to. Imagine, my dear, that an accident happened to Edouard and me six days ago that might have had most serious results."

"And you didn't mention it in your letters, Marie!"

"I should simply have worried you to no purpose. I had an errand in one of the most crowded parts of Paris; I hired a chair, and Edouard was walking by my side. As we were crossing Rue Beaubourg we suddenly found ourselves in the midst of a crowd of people, fighting among themselves. The street was blocked with vehicles, and the horses attached to a fine carriage, which had got caught in the jam, took fright at the yelling, and ran away in spite of the coachman's struggles to hold them. It was a frightful hubbub; I tried to jump from my chair, but at that moment my bearers were thrown down and I fell; it's a miracle that I wasn't trampled to death. They pulled me out from under the horses' feet, unconscious, and took me into a house, just where the ghastly

thing took place. I came to myself there, in a shop, out of sight of the crowd who were pressing about the door, thanks to the prompt assistance rendered me by monsieur, whose house it was. That is not all. When I recovered my senses, it was impossible for me to walk; my terror, the risk I had run, and my fall had completely prostrated me. I could but yield to the insistence of monsieur, who offered, as soon as the crowd had dispersed, to get me another chair, and begged me, while he was absent, to remain with his wife, who was untiring in thoughtful attentions to me."

"Monsieur—" said M. de Lamotte, rising.

But his wife checked him.

"Stay, my dear; I have not finished! Monsieur returned in about an hour; I was beginning to feel better; but before I left him, I was inconsiderate enough to say that in the confusion I had been robbed; yes, they had taken my diamond ear-rings which came to me from my mother. You cannot conceive all the trouble monsieur took to discover the thief; how many visits he paid to the police! I was ashamed—"

Although M. de Lamotte did not as yet know what motive, other than gratitude, had led his wife to bring the stranger home with her, he rose again and went to him with outstretched hand.

"I can understand my son's friendship for you now, monsieur. You did very wrong to try to belittle your kind action and to evade my thanks, Monsieur Derues."

"Monsieur Derues?" said the monk.

"You know monsieur's name, dear?" asked Madame de Lamotte quickly.

"Edouard told it me."

The monk at this point walked to where Derues was sitting.

"Do you live on Rue Beaubourg?" he said, "and are you M. Derues, formerly a grocer?"

"Yes, brother."

"If you need a sponsor here, I will answer for you. Chance, madame, has brought you in contact with one of the men whose reputation for piety and probity is most firmly established; he will permit me to add my meed of praise to yours."

"In truth, I know not in what way I have deserved it."

"I am Brother Marchois, of the order of Camaldules. You see that I ought to know you."

Thereupon the monk went on to explain to the curate, and to M. and Madame de Lamotte, that the community to which he belonged had given its confidence to honest Derues, who undertook to sell on their account the goods made by the fathers in their retreat. Brother Marchois, without interruption from any source, narrated a multitude of good deeds that were not known, and instances of his piety, to which his hearers listened with feelings of pleasure and admiration. Derues received these puffs of incense with an air of sincere humility and modesty which would have deceived the most skillful physiognomist.

By the time that the encomiastic warmth of the panegyrist had in a measure subsided, it was almost dark. The curate and his guest had no more than time to reach the parsonage without running the risk of stumbling and breaking their necks on the rough, stony roads which led thither. They took their leave, and a room was made ready for Derues.

"To-morrow," said Madame de Lamotte, "you will talk with my husband of the affair that brings you here, to-morrow or some other day, for I beg you, monsieur,

to consider yourself at home, and the longer you stay the greater pleasure you will afford us."

They parted for the night.

It was a sleepless night for Derues; thoughts of crime floated confusedly through his mind. His chance meeting with Madame de Lamotte, and the fortuitous presence of the monk, just at the right time to outdo himself in the sort of praise which created such a favorable opinion of him, seemed to him secret suggestions which he ought not to neglect. He had visions of new treachery, of a monstrous crime, to which he could not as yet clearly see his way; but at all events there was stealing to be done, and blood to be shed, and the genius of murder excited him and kept him awake, as remorse might have troubled the slumber of another.

Meanwhile Madame de Lamotte was saying to her husband:

"Well, what do you think of my protégé, or rather of the protector heaven sent me?"

"I confess that faces are often very deceitful; he's a man I would have had hanged on his face alone."

"It is true that he isn't very happily endowed in that respect; indeed his appearance procured him a very poor compliment from me that I was very sorry to have paid him. When I came to myself and saw him standing by me in a costume much more simple and careless than the one he wears to-day—"

"You were afraid?"

"Not exactly; but I thought that I was indebted for the trouble that was being taken on my account to a man of the very lowest class, some poor devil who hasn't food to eat every day, and my first acknowledgment took the shape of a piece of money."

"Which he refused?"

"Which he accepted for the poor of the parish. It was then that he told me his name, Cyrano Derues de Bury, and informed me that the shop and everything in it belonged to him, and that he himself occupied rooms in the house. I lost myself in apologies; but his reply was that he congratulated himself on my mistake, because it was the means of enabling him to help some poor fellow. I was deeply touched by his kindness of heart, and begged him to accept another gold piece."

"You did well, most assuredly, my love; but what reason had he for coming to Buisson? The first time I went to Paris I would have called upon him and thanked him for what he did for you, and meanwhile a letter from me would have been sufficient. Did he carry his good nature and interest so far as to propose to accompany you?"

"Upon my word! you can't shake off your first impression of him; be frank, isn't that so?"

"Faith!" laughed M. de Lamotte, "it's a pity for an honest man to have such a face as that! he would do well to persuade the good Lord to present him with another physiognomy."

"Still prejudiced! Poor man, it isn't his fault that he was made so."

"By the way, you spoke of some business that we had to discuss together. What business is it?"

"He will be able, I think, to help us procure the money we are looking for."

"Who told him that I was in need of money?"

"I did."

"You did! Well, well! it would seem that this gentleman is decidedly a friend of the family. Pray, how did you happen to confide that to him?"

"You would know before this if you hadn't inter-

rupted me. Let me tell you the whole story in order. The day after my accident, I left the hotel with Edouard about noon and went to his house to reiterate my gratitude. I was received by his wife, who told me that he had gone to my hotel to inquire for my son and me, and also to obtain further information as to the theft committed the day before. The woman, who seemed a modest creature of very ordinary understanding, asked me to sit down and await his return. I did so because I feared to offend her if I refused. After about two hours M. Derues came in. His first thought after greeting me, and expressing the liveliest interest concerning my health, was to call for his children, two charming, fresh, rosy creatures, whom he covered with kisses. We talked of indifferent matters at first, then he offered his services, placed himself at my disposal, and begged me to spare neither his time nor his trouble. I told him why I came to Paris, and the vexatious experience I was having; for not one of all the persons I had seen had given me a favorable reply. He gave me to understand that he could perhaps be of service to me, and the very next day he informed me that he had talked with a capitalist, but was unable to come to any agreement as he had no definite information. So I thought that the best thing to do was to bring him here and present him to you, so that you could have a full understanding with each other. When I first suggested the journey to him, he refused, and only consented to come finally at my urgent request and Edouard's. That's the whole story, my dear, of my acquaintance with M. Derues. I hope you don't think I acted too rashly."

"It's all right," said M. de Lamotte, "to-morrow I will talk with him, and in any event I promise to be courteous to him; I cannot forget the service he rendered you."

The conversation between the husband and wife went no farther at that time.

With his unmatched skill in assuming every sort of mask and playing all parts, Derues had little difficulty in overcoming M. de Lamotte's prejudices, and he made use very adroitly of the affection the son had conceived for him, to worm himself into the father's good graces. It is impossible to say whether at this time he actually meditated the crime which he committed subsequently; it is reasonable to think that he did not plan such atrocious schemes so long a time before their execution. But there is no question that the idea in the rough entered his brain then, and thenceforth nothing could turn his thoughts away from it. What route he would take to the distant goal on which his cupidity had fixed its gaze, he did not as yet know, but he said to himself: "This fortune must belong to me some day." It was the death sentence of its possessors.

No details and no definite information of Derues' first visit to Buisson-Sonef are to be had. It is known, however, that when he went away he enjoyed the full confidence of the family, and he carried on a regular correspondence with M. and Madame de Lamotte. In this way he was able to put in practice his skill as a forger, and to succeed in imitating the poor woman's handwriting so perfectly as to deceive her husband himself.

Some months elapsed and none of the hopes Derues had planted in their hearts were realized; a loan was always on the point of being negotiated, and some unforeseen circumstance always made it fall through. Derues displayed such astuteness and dexterity in these pretended negotiations that instead of suspecting him they pitied him for the fruitless trouble he was forced to take.

M. de Lamotte's embarrassment increased, and the sale of Buisson-Sonef became inevitable. Derues came forward as a purchaser, and actually bought the estate at private sale on December 22, 1775. It was agreed between the parties that the price, one hundred and thirty thousand livres, should not be payable until 1776 : this delay was necessary to enable Derues to raise the money. It was a large transaction, and he would not have entered into it, he said, had it not been for his friendship for M. de Lamotte, and his desire to see him well out of his embarrassment.

But when the time fixed for the payment arrived, about the middle of the year 1776, he found himself unable to pay. It is very certain that he had never intended to, but one noteworthy feature of this darksome story is the man's insatiable avarice, the passion for gold which guided all his actions and sometimes made him neglect the dictates of prudence. The wealth which he amassed by three bankruptcies, by his continual thefts and by loaning money at usurious rates, at once became invisible. He allowed nothing to stand in the way of acquiring gold and when once his hands had closed upon a louis, they could not relax their hold. He would always risk his reputation for probity rather than part with one sou. It is stated by several persons worthy of belief that the report was widely current among his contemporaries that the monster possessed vast treasures which he had buried, without revealing their hiding place even to his wife. Perhaps that is merely one of those vague, unfounded rumors which must be cast aside; perhaps it is the truth which has only partially come to light. Would it not be a strange thing if, after more than half a century, some mysterious hiding place should open and cast up the fruit of his larcenies? Who can say that a part

of his gold, found by chance, has not been the basis of fortunes, the source of which has never been known even to their possessors?

Although he had the greatest interest in not arousing M. de Lamotte's suspicions when he was his debtor for so considerable a sum, Derues at this time allowed his creditors to force him into bankruptcy again. But in those days ordinary lawsuits had no publicity; they lived their lives and died without being heard of except by the magistrates and counsel. To avoid the arrest and imprisonment with which he was threatened, he took refuge at Buisson-Sonef with his family, and remained there from Whitsuntide until the end of November. After being entertained during all that time as a friend, he returned to Paris, on the pretext that he was going to receive an inheritance which would enable him to pay the sum stipulated in the contract of sale.

The source of this pretended inheritance was a relative of his wife, Monsieur Despeignes Duplessis, who was murdered in his chateau near Beauvais. We have referred in a note on a previous page to the suspicions which attached to Derues in this connection. In the absence of positive proofs we cite it only as a probability.

Derues had made such definite promises to M. de Lamotte that it was impossible for him to evade them. It was necessary for him either to make the payment or to annul the contract. Further correspondence ensued between the creditors and the debtor. The letters were couched in the most friendly tone and filled with protestations on one side and with blind confidence on the other. But all Derues' adroitness resulted in nothing more than a few months' delay. At last M. de Lamotte, being unable to leave Buisson-Sonef because of important matters which demanded his presence, gave his wife a

power of attorney, consented to another separation, and sent her to Paris with Edouard.

Unhappily for all of them, he notified the murderer of the arrival of his wife and son.

We have passed rapidly over the interval between M. de Lamotte's first interview with Derues and the moment when the victims are about to fall into the trap; it would have been a simple matter for us to imagine long conversations, and invent scenes in which we might have shown his consummate hypocrisy in bold relief; but the reader knows now all that we care to tell him. To afford a proper insight into the mysteries of this vicious organization, we purposely went slowly with our narrative at first, and surcharged it with all the facts that could shed any light upon those sombre features. But, after these laborious preparations, comes the drama itself, swift moving, throbbing with excitement; events, long held back, accumulate and press eagerly on; the plot thickens and nears its end. We shall see Derues, untiring Proteus, changing his name and his dress and his manner of speech, appearing in every guise, sowing lies and pitfalls from one end of France to the other, and after all his efforts, after such prodigious activity and scheming, returning at last to stumble over a corpse.

The letter from Buisson-Sonef reached Paris on December 14, in the morning. On the same day an unknown man called at the hotel where Madame de Lamotte and her son lodged on their former visit. He inquired as to the number of vacant rooms and found that there were four; he engaged them for one Dumoulin, said to have reached Paris that morning from Bordeaux; but he had simply passed through the capital on his way to meet some relatives a few leagues beyond, and bring them back with him. A part of the

price of the rooms was paid in advance, and it was expressly stipulated that they should be let to no one before Dumoulin's return, as he might come with his family at any time.

The same man visited other furnished hotels in the neighborhood, and hired other vacant rooms, sometimes for a stranger he was expecting, sometimes for a friend whom he could not accommodate at his own house.

About three o'clock the Place de Grève was crowded with people; thousands of heads swarmed at the windows of all the houses near by. A parricide was to be executed, for a crime committed under most atrocious circumstances, with incredible refinement of barbarity. The penalty was apportioned to the crime, and the culprit was made fast to the wheel. The most profound silence, a terrifying silence, reigned in that vast throng, thirsting for the excitement of bloodshed. Three times the dull sound of the instrument of torture was heard crushing the victim's bones. He uttered a fearful shriek which made all those who heard it shudder with horror. One man alone, who, despite his struggles, could not force his way through the crowd and cross the square, was unmoved and said to himself, casting a look of scorn toward the culprit: "Imbecile! he couldn't deceive anyone!"

A moment later the flames rose from the stake; at that there was a great commotion among the people, and he succeeded in breaking out a path for himself, and reaching one of the streets that led into the square.

The sky was overcast, and the wan light scarcely penetrated that ill-favored alley, as hideous as its name, which, until a few years ago, crept like a long serpent through the mire of that quarter. At that hour, because of the attractions presented by the death-festival, it was well-nigh deserted. The man who left the square walked

slowly along, carefully reading all the signs at the doors. He stopped in front of number 73. A fat woman was sitting in the doorway of a shop, busily engaged in knitting. Over the door was inscribed in large yellowish letters:

"VEUVE MASSON."

He saluted the woman and said to her:

"Is there a cellar to let in this building?"

"Yes, friend," replied the widow.

"May I speak with the proprietor?"

"It's myself, by your leave."

"Show me the cellar. I am a dealer in wines in the provinces; my business frequently calls me to Paris, and I am looking for a cellar where I can store goods that I have for sale on commission."

They went down together. After making a careful examination, and assuring himself that it was not too damp for the high-grade wines he wished to store there, they agreed upon the price, and he paid the first quarter's rent in advance, and was inscribed on widow Masson's books under the name of Ducoudray.

Need we name this man? It was Derues.

In the evening when he returned home his wife informed him that a large trunk had been brought to the house for him.

"Very good," said he; "the cabinetmaker of whom I ordered it is a man of his word."

Then he ate his supper and played with his children. The next day, which was Sunday, he received the sacrament to the great edification of his devout neighbors.

On Monday, the 16th, he and his wife met Madame de Lamotte and Edouard, as they alighted from the Montereau coach.

"My husband wrote you, did he not, M. Derues?" inquired Madame de Lamotte.

"Yes, madame, two days ago; and I have ordered my apartments to be made ready for your reception."

"What! didn't M. de Lamotte ask you to engage the rooms I had before at the Hotel de France?"

"His letter didn't mention the subject, and if you still intend to go there, I hope you will change your mind. Pray, do not deprive me of the pleasure of repaying the hospitality which I accepted from you for so long a time. Your room is all ready, as is this dear boy's," he added, taking Edouard's hand, "and I am very sure that if you should ask his opinion he would advise you not to go looking for accommodation elsewhere."

"Of course I would," said the boy; "and I don't understand why one should stand on ceremony with friends."

It may have been by mere chance, it may have been on account of a secret presentiment, it may have been because she foresaw the possibility of heated discussion between them, at all events Madame de Lamotte resisted his entreaties. Alleging a business engagement which he could not postpone, Derues bade his wife accompany the mother and son to the Hotel de France, and mentioned three other hotels as the only ones in that quarter where she could secure suitable accommodation in case she should find no vacant rooms at the first named.

Two hours later Madame de Lamotte and her son returned to Derues' house on Rue Beaubourg.

This house was situated opposite Rue des Ménétriers, and was very recently demolished when Rue Rambuteau was laid out. In 1776 it was one of the finest houses on Rue Beaubourg, and one must needs have been in comfortable circumstances to live there, for the apartments

commanded a high rent. A wide arched doorway opened into a hall which was lighted from a small yard at the further end. The shop, to which Madame de Lamotte was taken at the time of the accident, was at the other side of the yard. On the right of the hall was the stairway, and Derues' suite was on the entresol.* The first room, lighted by a window looking on the yard, was used as a dining-room, and beyond it was a parlor very simply furnished according to the custom among the bourgeois and tradesmen of that period. At the right of the parlor was a large cabinet, which could be used as a library or a bed-room; at the left the sleeping-room of Derues and his wife. This last room was destined for Madame de Lamotte. Derues' wife was to share with her the alcove, in which there were two beds; her husband took up his quarters in the parlor, and Edouard occupied the cabinet.

During the days immediately following their arrival, they did not touch at all on matters of business. Madame de Lamotte had not come to Paris solely for the purpose of adjusting the Buisson-Sonef affair. Her son was nearing his fifteenth year, and after much hesitation she and her husband had determined to send him to boarding-school, to acquire an education, which he had been too long without. Derues undertook to find a

*The house in which Derues lived was really located on this spot; the arrangement of the rooms is not imaginary as might be supposed. A relative of mine, who, although she is well advanced in years, still retains all her faculties unimpaired and an inexhaustible memory, tells me that some years after the execution of Derues, she was looking for an apartment, and entered a house on Rue Beaubourg. The concierge showed her the entresol, and having expatiated at great length on its advantages, noticing that it seemed to please her, he added, to cap the climax: "It was in the alcove of this room that Derues poisoned Madame de Lamotte." "What!" cried madame—"this is Derues' apartment?" "Yes, madame, and it has been to let for three years." "Do you tell the same thing to everybody who looks at it?" "Yes, madame, it made so much talk."

suitable teacher for him, one at whose establishment he would before all else be instructed in those religious principles which the curate of Buisson, aided by his own exhortations, had already begun to develop in him. His investigations in that direction, and Madame de Lamotte's efforts to recover certain sums that were due to her husband, took some time. It may be that, when he was on the verge of committing the crime, Derues retarded the fatal moment as long as he could. And yet such a supposition is hardly in keeping with his character. It is impossible even to do the man the honor of accrediting him with the slightest indication of remorse, with the least twinge of compassion or doubt. So far from that being the case, the fair conclusion from all the facts that have come to our knowledge seems to be that Derues, faithful to the traditions of his past life, tried the effect of poison upon the two unfortunate creatures at once. It is a fact that they had been scarcely twenty-four hours under his roof before they both complained of extreme weakness of the stomach, a trouble which neither of them had ever had before.

At the same time that he was thus testing the strength of their constitutions, he gained the credit of relieving them, as he knew the cause of their suffering. Notwithstanding her visible decline in health, Madame de Lamotte, having perfect confidence in him, did not even think of calling in a doctor. In order not to alarm her husband she concealed the state of her health from him, and all her letters spoke of nothing but the kindness and consideration with which she was treated.

On the 15th January, 1777, Edouard was placed at a boarding-school on Rue de l'Homme Armé. His mother was never to see him again. She left the house but once more, to place her husband's power of attorney in the

hands of a lawyer, who lived on Rue de Paon. When she returned to her room she was so weak and prostrated that she was obliged to keep her bed for several days. On January 29th, the wretched woman got up and sat at the window. She gazed abstractedly out upon the deserted Rue des Ménétriers, where the wind was piling up the snow in drifts. Who can say what melancholy thoughts passed through her mind? Everything was cold and silent and gloomy; all her surroundings were calculated to produce a painful impression, an involuntary sinking of the heart. To throw off the depressing thoughts which beset her, she forced herself to think of the happiest time of her whole life, the early days of her marriage. She recalled M. de Lamotte's enforced absences from home, when she was left alone at Buisson with her son, a baby in arms, and how she walked about through the cool shady paths in the park, and sat down, as night was falling, to breathe the sweet perfume of the flowers, and listen to the murmur of the rippling streams, or the sighing of the wind among the leaves. Then she suddenly awoke from these sweet memories to the stern reality, and wept bitterly, and called her husband and her son.

She was so absorbed in her thoughts that she did not hear the door open, and did not perceive that it had grown dark. The light of a candle aroused her with a start; she turned and saw Derues coming toward her. He was smiling. She struggled to force back the tears which were glistening in her eyes, and to resume her ordinary expression.

"I fear that I disturb you," he said, "but I beg you, madame, to permit me to leave in this room a large trunk in which I propose to keep some valuable property that has been entrusted to me, and that is now in

this wardrobe. I am afraid that it will inconvenience you."

"Am I not in your house? is it not rather I, who am a burden to your whole household? Pray, bring your trunk in here, and use the room as if I were anywhere else. I know that your heart is in the attentions you lavish upon me, but I would much prefer to save you all this trouble, and to be able soon to return to Buisson. I received a letter from my husband yesterday—"

"We will talk about that directly, if you wish," rejoined Derues. "I am going now to tell my servant to help me bring up the trunk. I have delayed until now, but it must go away in three days."

He went out, and was back again in a few moments. The trunk was placed in front of the wardrobe at the foot of the bed.

Poor doomed woman! it was her coffin and it was the grave-digger who brought it.

The servant withdrew, and he assisted Madame de Lamotte to walk to the fire-place, and rekindled the fire. He sat facing her, and by the flickering light of a candle which stood on a little table between them he could observe the traces of the poison upon her emaciated face at his leisure.

"I saw your son to-day," he said; "he complained to me that you neglect him, and that he hasn't seen you for twelve days. He doesn't know that you're not well; I didn't tell him. Dear boy! he does love you so dearly!"

"I would like to see him, too. Do you know, monsieur, that I am beset by the most melancholy presentiments, and it seems to me as if some great disaster were hanging over my head. Just now, when you came in, I was unable to think of anything but death. What is

the cause of my weakness and depression? surely it is something more than a mere passing indisposition. Be frank with me; haven't I changed horribly? don't you think that my husband would be terrified to see me looking as I do?"

"You are easily worried," replied Derues, "that's a peculiarity of yours. Didn't I see you, almost a year ago, terribly alarmed about Edouard's health, when he didn't even dream of being sick? I am not so easily frightened. My former profession, and that of apothecary, which I studied in my youth, have given me some knowledge of medicine. I have often been consulted, and have treated patients who thought that their cases were hopeless; but I can assure you that I never saw anyone with a more robust constitution than yours. Set your mind at rest, and don't invent chimeras. The worst enemy of disease is peace of mind. Your low spirits will pass away, and then your strength must return."

"God grant it! but I feel that it is growing less from day to day."

"Nevertheless we have a jaunt or two to take together. I have heard from the notary at Beauvais: the obstacles which have prevented him from turning over to me the property of my wife's kinsman M. Duplessis, are to a great extent removed. I have a hundred thousand livres at my disposal, that is to say, at yours, and in a month at the latest I shall pay the whole amount. You ask me to be frank," he added, with a suspicion of irony and rebuke in his tone; "do you be frank with me: confess, madame, that you and your husband were somewhat anxious, and that the numerous delays I have been forced to ask for seemed ominous to you."

"It is true," she replied; "but we have never suspected your good faith."

"And you were right. A man is not always able to carry out what he has planned; events disarrange our calculations; but the one thing that belongs to us absolutely is the desire to do right, probity, and I can say that I never knowingly wronged any man. I am very glad to be able to redeem my promises to you at last. I trust that when I am the proprietor of Buisson-Sonef you will not feel obliged to leave it."

"Thanks; perhaps I will come back and see the old place once in a while, for all my happy memories are connected with it. Is it necessary for me to go with you to Beauvais, my friend?"

"Why should you not? The journey would be a change for you."

She raised her eyes to his face, and said with a sad smile:

"But I am in no condition to undertake it."

"No, especially if you imagine that you cannot. Come, have you confidence in me?"

"Perfect confidence, as you know."

"Well, then, put yourself in my hands. This evening I will prepare a draught for you to take to-morrow morning, and then I can fix the duration of this malady which alarms you so. Two days hence I will fetch Edouard from his school to celebrate the beginning of your convalescence, and on February 1st, no later, we will start. What I say surprises you; but you will see if I am not a good doctor, and more skillful than many who are considered very learned because they have obtained a diploma."

"I place myself under your care, then, Monsieur le Docteur."

"Remember what I say. On February 1st, *you shall leave this house.*"

"To begin my cure, can you give me something to make me sleep to-night?"

"Surely I can; I will go now, and send my wife to you; she will give you a draught which you will promise me not to refuse?"

"I will follow your orders in every point. Adieu, my friend."

"Adieu, madame; keep up a good heart."

He bowed and left her alone.

He employed the rest of the evening compounding the fatal potion. The next day, an hour or two after Madame de Lamotte had taken it, the servant who handed it to her went to Derues and told him that she was sleeping so heavily that she was snoring, and asked him if she ought not to wake her. He thereupon went into the room, and drew aside the curtains of the bed. He listened for some time, and realized that what the maid called snoring was really the death rattle. He sent the servant out of the city with a letter to one of his friends, and bade her not return until the following Monday, February 3d. He also sent his wife away, on some pretext that was never divulged, and remained alone with his victim.

The horrible ghastly spectacle would assuredly have moved the very soul of the most hardened criminal. The man most familiar with murder, most accustomed to shed the blood of his fellows, would have felt his bowels of compassion stir within him, or if not compassion, disgust would have filled his soul at the sight of the endless, useless agony. But he, as calm and indifferent as if he had no knowledge of evil, sat coldly at her pillow, as a physician might have done. From time to time he counted the beats of her dying pulse; he looked closely at her glassy eyes which rolled about in their sockets but

saw nothing, and he felt no shuddering fear at the approach of night, which increased the horror of that horrible tête-à-tête.

The most profound silence reigned in the house; the street was deserted, and the only sound was that made by the hail and snow against the windows, and at intervals the whistling of the wind, as it came rushing down the chimney and scattered the ashes in the hearth. A single lamp, behind the curtains, lighted this gloomy scene, and its flickering flame projected ghostly, dancing shadows on the walls of the alcove.

The wind went down, the hail ceased to fall, and during the lull in the storm, there came a knocking, gentle at first, then more decided, upon the outer door of the suite. Derues quickly dropped the hand of the moribund, and listened intently. The knocking was repeated; he felt the blood rush from his cheeks; he threw the sheet over Madame de Lamotte's head like a shroud, drew the curtains of the alcove, and went to the door.

"Who is there?" he asked.

"Open the door, Monsieur Derues," was the reply, in a voice which he recognized as that of a woman at Chartres whose agent he was, and who had sent him certain contracts, to collect the interest due on them. She had become suspicious of his honesty, and as she was to leave Paris the next morning, she had determined to take her papers out of his hands.

"Open," she said again; "don't you recognize my voice?"

"I am very sorry that I can't open the door; my servant has gone out; she took the key with her, and left me locked in."

"Open, I say; I absolutely must speak with you."

"Come again to-morrow."

"I am going home to-morrow, and I want you to return me my contracts this evening."

He refused again; but she said in a firm, determined tone:

"I will come in! The concierge told me at first that there was no one here; but, as I came by Rue des Ménétriers, I saw the light in the window of your bed-room. My brother, who is with me, remained below; I shall call him if you don't open the door."

"Come in, then," said Derues; "your contracts are in the parlor. Wait here while I get them."

The woman was staring at him; she took his hand and said:

"*Mon Dieu!* what's the matter with you? how pale you are!"

"Nothing's the matter with me; wait for me here."

But she clung to his arm and followed him into the parlor in spite of his prohibition.

He began to look among the papers strewn upon a table, in a dazed sort of way.

"Here they are," he said, "now go."

"Upon my word," she rejoined, looking over the contracts, "I never before knew you to be in such a hurry to return what doesn't belong to you. Hold the candle steadier, pray; your hand trembles so that I can't read!"

At that moment the silence was broken by an agonizing cry followed by a long-drawn groan in the room at the right of the parlor.

"What in God's name is that?" cried the woman. "One would say somebody was dying."

The consciousness of his imminent danger restored Derues' self-possession.

"Don't be frightened. It's my wife; she had a sharp attack of fever to-day, and is delirious now. That was why I told the concierge not to let anyone come up."

The noise continued in the adjoining room. Overcome with terror she could not explain or surmount, the woman rushed hurriedly from the room and down the stairs. As soon as he had secured the door, Derues returned to the bed-room.

At the moment when the last spark of life is dying away, nature often summons her expiring strength for a supreme effort. Poor Madame de Lamotte had thrown aside her winding-sheet. The pains which tore her entrails had given back to her a certain convulsive strength; inarticulate sounds were falling from her lips. Derues drew near the bed and held her down upon it. She fell back upon the pillow. Her whole body shook convulsively, her hands twisted and tore the sheets, her teeth chattered and bit at the hair which fell in disorder over her face and her bare shoulders.

"Water! water!" she cried; and in a moment: "Edouard! Husband! Edouard! is it you?"

With one last superhuman effort she sat up in bed, seized the poisoner's arm and repeated:

"Edouard! oh!"

Then she fell back a lifeless mass, and dragged Derues with her. His face touched her livid cheek; he raised his head, but the dying woman's hand, clenched with pain, held him like a vise. Her icy fingers seemed made of steel, and could not open; it was as if the victim were determined to turn the tables on her murderer, and weld him to the proof of his crime.

He succeeded in extricating himself from her grasp, and placed his hand upon her heart.

"It's over at last," he said; "it took her a long while

to make up her mind. What time is it? Nine o'clock! For twelve hours she has been fighting death."

While the flesh was still warm, he drew the feet together, crossed the arms upon the chest, and placed the body in the trunk. After he had closed and locked it, he made the bed over, undressed, and lay down on the other bed, where he was actually able to sleep.

On the next day, February 1st, the day he had fixed for Madame de Lamotte *to leave the house*, he hired two porters to carry the trunk on a push-cart, about ten o'clock in the morning, to one Mouchy's, a carpenter of his acquaintance near the Louvre. He had previously engaged the porters in a distant quarter of Paris, and he was unknown to them. After paying them handsomely he gave each of them a bottle of wine. The two men were never seen again.

Derues asked the carpenter's wife to allow the trunk to stand in the workshop, pretending that he had forgotten something for which he must return home, and saying that he would come and take it away in two or three hours. But he actually left it there two days. Why? That is what no one can say. We may imagine that he needed that length of time to have a hole dug under the stairway in the cellar on Rue de la Mortellerie. However that may be, the delay led to an encounter that was near being fatal to him. He alone, of all the actors in the scene, knew the danger that threatened him, and his self-possession did not abandon him for an instant.

On the third day, as he was walking along beside the hand-cart that held the trunk, he was accosted in front of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois by a man to whom he owed money, and who had obtained execution against him. At an imperative gesture from this man the porter stopped. The creditor sharply questioned Derues and

reproached him in vigorous, abusive language for his bad faith. Derues replied in the most conciliatory way, but it was impossible for him to silence the man, and a constantly growing circle of idlers was soon formed about them.

"When will you pay me?" cried the creditor. "I have an execution against you. What is there in that trunk? valuable goods, which you are removing secretly, so that you can laugh at my efforts, as you did two years ago?"

Derues felt a cold shiver run down his back; he exhausted his store of protestations, but the other was fairly beside himself, and went on louder than before.

"Oho!" he shouted, turning to the crowd, "all your grimaces and your monkey-tricks and your signs of the cross won't avail you; I must have my money, and as I know the value of your promises I will pay myself with my own hands. Come, villain, make haste! tell me what there is in that trunk, or better still, open it; if you won't, I'll call the police."

The sympathies of the crowd were divided between the debtor and creditor, and it may be that an affray would have resulted, had not their attention been diverted by the arrival on the scene of a new personage. A voice which soared above the tumult caused a score of heads to turn; it was the voice of a woman of the lower class, crying:

"Here's the frightful story of Leroi de Valine, sixteen years old, condemned to death for poisoning his whole family."

She approached the group, calling her wares at the top of her voice, and staggered up to Derues, pushing her way through the crowd by plying fist and elbow vigorously.

"Well! well!" she exclaimed, after eying him from head to foot, "if it isn't you, gossip Derues! Here you are in another bad business like the day you set fire to your shop on Rue Saint Victor!"

He recognized the peddler who insulted him in front of his shop some years before, and whom he had not seen since.

"Yes, yes," she continued, "stare at me with your little round cat's-eyes. Perhaps you'll say that you don't know who I am."

"Monsieur," said Derues to his creditor, "you see what insults you expose me to. I don't know this foul-mouthed creature."

"What! you don't know me! Why, you accused me of stealing from you! But luckily the honesty of the Maniffets is known to everyone in Paris, while yours—"

"Monsieur," Derues broke in, "this chest contains some valuable wine placed with me for sale. To-morrow I shall have the money for it, and sometime during the day I will pay what I owe you. But my customer is waiting for me; in heaven's name don't delay me any longer and deprive me of the means of paying you."

"Don't believe him, my good man," said the peddler; "it comes natural to him to lie."

"Monsieur, I swear that I will pay you to-morrow; you ought to have more faith in an honest man's word than in the drivel of a drunken woman."

The creditor was still wavering, when some one spoke up in Derues' behalf. It was Mouchy, the carpenter, who had ascertained the cause of the quarrel.

"For God's sake let monsieur pass," he cried. "The trunk has just come from my workshop, and I know that there's wine in it, for he told my wife so two days ago."

"Be my surety, my friend," said Derues.

"Certainly I will. I haven't known you for ten years to leave you in the lurch and refuse to answer for you. What the devil! are honest men to be held up thus on the public streets? Come, monsieur; have faith in his word, as I have."

They discussed the matter for some time, but at last the man who dragged the cart was allowed to go on.

The peddler tried to detain him, but Mouchy pushed her aside and bade her keep quiet.

"Bah! after all, it's none of my business," she cried. "Let him sell his wine if he can; I'll not go to his shop to drink it. This is the second time to my knowledge he's found a fool to go bail for him; the beggar must know the secret of making the seed of folly sprout. Say, gossip Derues, I'll be selling your paper some day, did you know it? Meanwhile:

"Buy the horrible story of Leroi de Valine, only sixteen years old, sentenced to death for poisoning his whole family!"

While she was entertaining the crowd with her grimaces and drunken gestures, and Mouchy addressing those who chose to listen to him, Derues went his way. Several times on the way from St. Germain l'Auxerrois to Rue de la Mortellerie he felt as if he were going to faint, and was obliged to stop. So long as the danger stared him in the face he had sufficient control over himself to meet it without flinching; but as soon as he had leisure to reflect on the depth of the abyss that had yawned for a moment at his very feet, it made him sick and dizzy.

Further precautions were necessary. His real name had been mentioned before the porter, and the widow Masson, the owner of the cellar, knew him under the name of Ducoudray. He went on ahead and asked for

the keys, which he had not yet had in his possession, and the trunk was taken down into the cellar without any awkward questions being asked. The porter did seem astonished, however, that wine intended for immediate sale should be deposited in such a place, and inquired whether he would want him the next day to take it somewhere else. Derues replied that the purchaser was to come there for it that day.

This question, and the fact that the man had been a witness of the scandalous scene we have described led Derues to dismiss him without letting him see the hole under the stairway. He tried to drag the trunk to the hole by himself, but his utmost strength was unequal to the task. His imprecations when he realized his weakness were terrible to hear, for he saw that he must call a stranger, some one who might betray him perhaps, into that charnel-house where nothing as yet suggested crime. He had no sooner escaped one danger, than he fell upon another, and he was already struggling with the consequences of his villainous act. He measured the size of the hole, and found that it was not deep enough. He thereupon left the house and went to the place where he hired the man who dug the hole, but he was unable to find him, for he had seen him but once and did not know his name. He used up two days in a fruitless search. On the third day, as he was crossing one of the quays of Paris at the hour when workingmen assemble there, a mason, noticing that he seemed to be looking for some one, accosted him and asked him what he wanted. Derues looked him over carefully, and thought that he could see in his face certain indications of very pronounced simplemindedness; so he said:

"Would you like to earn a crown easily?"

"Wouldn't I, citizen?" replied the mason; "work

is so scarce that I mean to leave Paris to-night to go back to the country."

"Very well; take your tools, a pick and spade, and come with me."

They went down into the cellar, and Derues ordered him to make the hole five feet and a half deep. While the man was at work, Derues sat beside the trunk, reading. When it was half done the man stopped to take breath, and asked him, as he leaned on his spade, what his purpose was in digging a hole of that depth. Derues, who anticipated the question perhaps, replied at once with perfect self-possession:

"I am going to bury some wine in bottles which I have in this trunk."

"Wine?" rejoined the other. "Ah ça! citizen, do you mean to poke fun at me because I look like a simpleton? I never heard of such a receipt as that for making wine better."

"Where do you come from?"

"Alençon."

"Cider-drinker! Did you get your education in Normandy? Just learn from me, my good fellow, from me, Jean-Baptiste Ducoudray, vine-grower of Tours and dealer in wines for ten years, that new wine, if buried like this for only a year, acquires the quality and value of the oldest wine."

"It may be," said the mason, resuming his spade, "but it seems queer to me all the same."

When he had done, Derues asked him to help him move the trunk nearer to the hole, so that it would be less trouble for him to take out the bottles and arrange them. He assented, but when he took hold of the trunk to move it, the fetid odor that came from it made him start back; he declared that the contents of

the trunk smelt too bad to be wine. Derues tried to make him believe that the foul smell came from a privy and pointed out the pipe. This explanation seemed to satisfy the mason, and he stooped over again to lift the trunk; but he was almost suffocated again. Thereupon he stood up and declared in most positive language that he would not follow Derues' instructions, for he was sure that the trunk contained nothing else than a putrefying corpse. He threatened to call for help if he would not raise the lid. At that Derues threw himself at his feet, and confessed that it was the dead body of a woman, who, to his sorrow, had taken lodgings at his house; that she had died there suddenly of a strange disease, and that he was so afraid of being suspected of having murdered her that he had determined to conceal the fact of her death, and bury her in that cellar.

The mason listened, terrified at such a confidence and uncertain whether he ought to believe what he said. Derues knelt at his feet, weeping and sobbing, beating his breast and tearing his hair; he called God and all the saints to bear witness to his uprightness and innocence, and produced the book he was reading while the mason was at work; it was the "Seven Psalms of Repentance."

"What an unfortunate wretch I am!" he cried. "This woman died at my house, I tell you, died suddenly, before I had time to call a doctor. I was alone; I might have been prosecuted, imprisoned, and perhaps convicted of a crime I didn't commit. Don't betray me! You are leaving Paris this evening; you can't be molested; no one will know that I called upon you, if this wretched affair is discovered later. I don't know your name and I don't want to know it but I tell you mine—Ducoudray. I put myself at your mercy; but listen to the voice of

pity! if not for my sake, for the sake of my wife and two children, poor creatures, who have nobody to look to for support but me!"

Seeing that the man was moved, he opened the trunk.

"There," said he, "look at the woman's body; you see there is no mark of violence upon it. O my God!" he added, clasping his hands and with an accent of despair mingled with pious fervor, "O my God, who canst read men's hearts, and who knowest my innocence, canst Thou not perform a miracle to save the upright man? canst Thou not bid this body to bear witness for me?"

The mason was bewildered by this flood of words. He could not restrain his tears, and he promised to say nothing, being convinced that Derues was not guilty, and that appearances only were against him. Moreover he did not neglect to employ the most persuasive of all arguments; he handed the mason two louis d'or, and together they buried the body of Madame de Lamotte.

Incredible as this transaction seems, so incredible that we might well be suspected of inventing it, it unquestionably took place. At the time of his examination Derues himself revealed it by repeating the fable he had told the mason. He thought that he had denounced him, but he was mistaken. This confidant of his crime, who might have been the first to put the authorities on the right track, did not reappear, and except for Derues' admissions no one would have known of his existence.

The first crime being an accomplished fact, the next victim was already marked out for slaughter. He was in some suspense at first as to the results of his forced disclosures, and waited for some days. The next day his creditor was made indifferent by receiving the amount of his judgment. Derues redoubled his demonstrations

of pious ardor; he cast furtive glances at everybody he met; he watched every face to detect some indication of suspicion. But no one avoided him, nor pointed a finger at him, nor spoke in undertones when he came in sight; everywhere he was greeted with the same kindly expression. Nothing seemed to be changed, so far as he was concerned; suspicion passed over his head, without stopping there.

His courage returned, and he set to work anew. Indeed, even if he wished to remain idle now, he could not; he needs must obey the fatal law of crime that bloodstains must be washed out with blood, and that death must be constantly appealed to to stifle the accusing voice that calls for vengeance from the tomb.

Young Edouard de Lamotte, who loved his mother as dearly as she loved him, was anxious because she did not come to see him, and wondered much at her sudden indifference. Derues wrote him a letter in the following words:

"At last I have good news for you, my dear boy; but you must not tell your good mother that I have betrayed her secret; she would scold me, for she is preparing a surprise for you, and the going and coming necessitated by the great affair are the cause of her not coming to you. You are to know nothing of it until the 11th or 12th of this month; but as everything is settled, I could not forgive myself if I prolonged for a single instant the state of uncertainty in which we have left you; only you must promise me to seem very much surprised. Your mother, who lives only for you, proposes to give you the most splendid present that one can receive at your age—your freedom. Yes, my boy, we thought we could see that you hadn't a very pronounced liking for study, and that the life of a hermit is little suited to

your disposition or your health. What I am saying is not meant as a reproach. Every man is born with a decided bent for something, and the way for him to succeed and to be happy is perhaps to follow his inclination. Your mother and I have had many long talks on this subject, and we have thought much about your future; at last she made up her mind. For ten days she has been at Versailles, soliciting a place among the pages for you. There's the whole of the mystery, and the motive that has kept her away from you; and as she is sure that you will be overjoyed with the plan, she wished to reserve for herself the pleasure of telling you. Once more I beg you, when you see her, which will be very soon, don't tell her that I wrote you about it, but feign surprise. It's a falsehood that I ask you to tell—true, but it's a very innocent one; the good purpose will take away the sin, and God grant that we never have any worse ones on our consciences! And so, instead of the lessons and harsh-precepts of your instructors, instead of the monotonous school life, you are to come into possession of your liberty, and enjoy the pleasures of the world and the court. It terrifies me a bit, and I will admit that at first I discouraged the plan. I begged your mother to reflect, to consider that in the new life you would lead there was danger that you would forget the pious sentiments which her influence awoke in you, and which I had the good fortune to assist in developing during my stay at Buisson-Sonef. I remember with deep emotion your devout fervor, and the sincere outpouring of your heart to the Creator when you approached the blessed table for the first time; and I, as I knelt beside you, envied you the purity of heart and innocence of soul which made your eyes shine with a divine light, and I prayed God to give me credit, in default of virtue, for the love

for the celestial verities which I had kindled in your heart. Your piety is my work, Edouard, and I defended it against your mother's plans; but she replied that in every career a man is always the master of his own actions, good or evil; and as I have no authority over you, as friendship gives me no right except the right to advise, I had to yield. If it is your vocation, follow it.

"My duties are so numerous (I am getting in from various sources a hundred thousand livres, which will almost pay for Buisson) that I shall not have a moment this week to go and see you. Employ the time in thinking the matter over, and write me at length how the plan strikes you. If you have any scruples, as I had, you must tell your mother of them, for she has no desire but for your happiness. Speak frankly to me, open your heart to me. We have agreed that on the 11th I shall come to the school and take you to Versailles, where Madame de Lamotte is waiting to embrace you. Adieu, my dear boy; write to me soon. Your father knows nothing of this as yet; his consent will be asked after yours is secured."

The reply to this letter was not slow in coming, and it was all that Derues wished; the boy welcomed the idea joyfully. His letter was such a means of justifying himself as the murderer sought to procure, a proof which he might use, if need were, to connect the present with the past.

On the 11th February, in the morning (it was Mardi Gras), he called at the boarding-school and informed the principal that young de Lamotte's mother bade him bring the boy to Versailles. But he took him to his own house, claiming that he had received a letter from Madame de Lamotte, asking him not to come until the next

day. He set out therefore on Ash Wednesday after breakfast, at which meal Edouard drank some chocolate.

When they reached Versailles they alighted at the Fleur-de-Lis inn; and there the indisposition which the young man had felt on the road took a turn for the worse. He was taken with vomiting; the inn-keeper, who had young children of his own, thought that he recognized symptoms of small-pox, which was then raging at Versailles, and would not let them remain, saying that he had no vacant room. This setback would have disconcerted any other than Derues, but at every new obstacle his audacity and energy and resources increased tenfold. Leaving Edouard in a room on the ground floor of the inn, cut off from all communication with the rest of the house, he started off at once in quest of lodgings, and ransacked the town. After searching for a long time in vain, he found at last, at a cooper's on the corner of Rue Saint-Honoré and Rue de l'Orangerie, a furnished room, which he hired under the name of Beaupré, at thirty sous a day, for himself and his nephew who had been suddenly taken ill. To avoid troublesome questions later on, he informed the cooper that he was a physician, that the purpose of his journey to Versailles was to establish his nephew in some one of the public offices, and that the boy's mother would arrive in a few days to join him in soliciting the place, and to interview certain influential persons at court to whom he had letters of introduction. As soon as he had delivered himself of this fable with the truthful accent he was so clever at imparting to falsehoods, he returned to Edouard. He was already so prostrated that he could hardly drag himself along as far as Martin, the cooper's, and when he arrived there, he fainted. He was taken to his room, and Derues begged to be left alone with him, and to be

supplied with the draughts for which he would give them directions.

Whether it was that his youthful vigor fought hard against the poison, or that Derues purposely afforded himself the pleasure of seeing his victim suffer, the poor boy's death agony was prolonged until the fourth day. As he seemed to grow constantly worse, Derues sent the cooper's wife for a drug which he prepared and administered himself. It produced most atrocious pain, and Edouard's cries brought the cooper and his wife upstairs. They urged upon Derues the necessity of calling a doctor in consultation ; but this he flatly refused to do, saying that the man they would call in might be an ignoramus with whom he could not agree, and that he was too fond of his nephew to allow any other to treat him and nurse him.

"I know what his disease is," he added, looking upward, "and it is to be kept secret rather than proclaimed. Poor boy! whom I love as dearly as my own child, if God permits me to save you, moved by my tears and your suffering, your whole life will not be too long to bless Him and give thanks to Him!"

When Martin's wife asked what the disease was, he replied with a hypocritical blush:

"Don't ask me, madame; it's something of which you don't even know the name."

At another time Martin expressed his surprise that they had not yet seen the young man's mother, who Derues had said was to join him at Versailles; he asked how she would know that they were lodging with him, and if he did not wish to send some one to meet her when she arrived.

"His mother!" said Derues with a compassionate glance at Edouard as he lay stretched upon the bed,

pale, motionless, and apparently unconscious; "his mother! He calls her incessantly. Ah, monsieur, there are families which are much to be pitied! My urgent entreaties prevailed upon her to promise to come here, but does she still remember her promise? Pray, don't force me to say any more; it would be too hard to accuse a mother in her son's presence, of having forgotten her duty—there are secrets which must not be divulged. Wretched woman!"

Edouard moved uneasily, held out his arms, and moaned:

"Mother! mother!"

Derues ran to his side, and took his hands in his as if to warm them.

"Mother!" said the boy again. "Why haven't I seen her? she was expecting me—"

"You will see her soon; don't fret, my child."

"Just now I thought she was dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Derues. "Come, come, banish these gloomy thoughts. It's the fever that gives you such dreams."

"No!—oh, no!—I heard a secret voice that whispered to me: 'Your mother is dead!' And then I saw a livid corpse before my eyes—it was hers! I recognized her! She looked as if she had suffered such agony!"

"Dear boy! your mother's not dead. *Mon Dieu!* what frightful fancies you have! You will see her again, I tell you; she has been here already. Hasn't she, madame?" he added, turning to the cooper and his wife who were both leaning over the foot of the bed, and winking to them to quiet the child with this white lie; "isn't it true that she came here to his very bedside and kissed him while he was asleep, and that she will soon return?"

"Yes, yes, monsieur," said the woman, wiping her eyes; "and she urged my husband and me to help monsieur your uncle take care of you."

Edouard started and stared around with a wondering look in his eyes.

"My uncle?"

"Go out," whispered Derues to the man and wife, "go out; I'm afraid his paroxysms are coming on again. I am going to give him a draught to make him sleep a little."

"Adieu, monsieur, adieu," said the woman; "may God bless you for the care you bestow upon this poor young man!"

On Friday evening the patient had a violent attack of vomiting which seemed to relieve him. He rejected almost all of the poison, and had a comparatively quiet night. But on the Saturday morning Derues sent the cooper's little daughter to buy another drug which he prepared himself as he did the first. Edouard passed a terrible day; about six o'clock in the evening, Derues, seeing that his victim was nearing his end, raised the window which looked into the shop and called the cooper. He begged him to go as fast as he could for a priest.

When the priest arrived he found Derues by the dying boy's bed, weeping bitterly.

By the light of two candles placed upon a table with the holy water between them, began what was on one side an abominable, sacrilegious farce, a shocking parody on what is held most sacred and venerable among men, and on the other a devout and comforting ceremony. The cooper and his wife, their eyes bathed in tears, knelt in the middle of the room and muttered such prayers as they could remember. Derues yielded his place to the priest; but as the sufferer made no reply to the questions

put to him, he approached the bed again and leaned over Edouard, exhorting him to prepare for death.

"Have courage, my dear boy," he said; "the ills you suffer here below will be made up to you in heaven; God will weigh them in the scales of His infinite pity. Listen to the words of His holy minister, pour out your sins into his bosom, and obtain from him forgiveness thereof."

"Oh! how I suffer! how I suffer!' cried Edouard. "Water! water! to put out the fire that is consuming me!"

A violent convulsion shook his frame, followed by complete prostration and the death rattle. Derues fell on his knees, and the priest administered extreme unction to the moribund.

There was a moment of silence even more awful than his shrieks and sobs. The priest meditated a moment, crossed himself and began to pray. Derues also crossed himself and said in a low voice, shaken with grief:

"Go from this world, O Christian soul, in the name of God the Almighty Father, who made you; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Ever-living God, who suffered for you; in the name of the Holy Spirit, which rests upon you."

The young man started up and his whole frame trembled convulsively.

Derues continued:

"When you depart from this body, may the way be opened to you to the Holy Mountain of Sion, to Heavenly Jerusalem, to the vast throng of the angels, and to the church of the first-born, whose names are written in the sky."

"Mother! mother!" cried Edouard.

"May God arise," Derues went on, "and may all the

powers of darkness be scattered; may all the spirits of evil which hover in the air be put to flight, and may they not be bold enough to assail a lamb redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ."

"Amen," said the priest.

"Amen, amen," echoed Martin and his wife.

There was a momentary silence, during which nothing could be heard but Derues' stifled sobs.

The priest crossed himself again and said:

"Thou only begotten and beloved Son of the Ever-living God, we beseech Thee, by the merits of Thy blessed Passion, by Thy Cross, and by Thy death, to deign to deliver Thy servant from the pains of hell, and lead him to the happy land, to which Thou didst lead the robber crucified with Thee, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, livest and reignest, one God, world without end."

"Amen," said his hearers.

Derues took up the refrain, and the hissing sound that escaped from the dying boy's lips mingled with his voice.

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened."

"*Mon Dieu!—mon Dieu!*—what have I done to you that you torture me so?" moaned Edouard.

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: '*Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani,*' that is to say, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'"

"I am dying!—water! water!"

Martin's wife rose to her feet, and lifting his head from the pillow, gave him several spoonfuls of a draught that stood by.

Derues continued more slowly:

"After this Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith: 'I thirst.'

"Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth.

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said: 'It is finished;' and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost."

The dying boy's lips continued to move for some time without making any articulate sound. His limbs moved convulsively for the last time, and his head fell back.

"Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord," said the priest.

"For in Thy sight shall no man living be justified," responded Derues.

"Give not over to wild beasts the souls of them that praise Thy name."

"And forget not forever the souls of Thy poor."

Then they said in unison:

"To Thee, O Lord, we commend the soul of this Thy servant, that, on going out from this world it may live for Thee; and we implore Thy infinite mercy to forgive all the sins that his human frailty has led him to commit. We beseech Thee to that end. Amen."

Each one then threw holy water upon the body.

When the priest had withdrawn with the woman, Derues said to the cooper:

"This wretched youth has breathed his last without having had the consolation of embracing his mother. His last thought was for her. I now have a last, very painful duty to fulfil, one that my nephew solemnly imposed upon me. Some hours ago, realizing that death was near at hand, he asked me, as a last mark of my

affection for him, not to entrust to the hands of strangers the task of preparing his body for burial."

As he was going through with that operation in the presence of the cooper, who was deeply moved by his apparently sincere affliction, he added with a sigh:

"Poor boy! I shall never cease to mourn for him. It was dissolute living that killed him. Alas! monsieur, I learned of it too late. My poor nephew was stricken with a vile disease, and his death is due to its having been neglected. Evil examples were his ruin, and his mother is very much to blame. May God have mercy on her!"

When he had finished laying out the body, he threw into the fire two or three small packages that he pretended to have found in the boy's pockets, and said to his host, to confirm his imposture, that they contained drugs for the treatment of the disease.

He passed the whole night beside his victim, as he had done previously beside Madame de Lamotte's body.

On the Sunday morning he sent the cooper to the parish church of Saint-Louis to bespeak the most simple funeral procession possible, and bade him have the death certificate filled out with the name of Beaupré, native of Commercy in Lorraine. But he refused to go to the church himself and be present at the burial, on the ground that his grief was too keen. The cooper on his return from the funeral found him at prayer. Derues gave him the dead boy's clothing, and left him with a gift of money to be distributed to the poor of the parish, and to pay for masses for the repose of the soul of the departed.

In the evening he arrived at Paris and found several friends at his house, invited by his wife; he told them that he had just returned from Chartres, where he had

been on business. Every one noticed that he bore himself with a self-satisfied air that was not habitual with him, and during supper he sang several songs.

After these two crimes Derues by no means remained inactive. When the assassin was at rest for a moment, the thief resumed his occupation. His inordinate miserliness made him sigh for the money which Madame de Lamotte's death and her son's had drawn him into spending. He longed for an opportunity to make it up; and so he had the assurance, two days after his return from Versailles, to call at Edouard's school. He told the master that he had received a letter from the boy's mother, desiring him to keep her son with him, and to take charge of his linen. The master's wife, who was present at the interview, replied that that could not be, that M. de Lamotte would be aware of his wife's resolution, which she would not have formed except on consultation with him; and that only the day before they had received a basket of game from Buisson-Sonef, with a letter from Edouard's father, in which he urged them to take the best of care of his son.

"If what you say is true," added the woman, "it is by your advice, doubtless, that Madame de Lamotte has determined to take her son away. But I will write to Buisson."

"Do nothing of the sort, monsieur," said Derues, turning to the master. "It is possible that M. de Lamotte knows nothing about it; I have proof that his wife doesn't always consult him. She is at Versailles, where I took Edouard to join her, and I will tell her of your refusal."

In order to make certain of impunity for his other crimes, Derues had determined that M. de Lamotte too must die; but before carrying out that determination,

he intended to have evidence of the pretended new agreement between himself and Françoise Perrier. He did not choose to wait until the entire family was wiped out before coming forward as the lawful owner of Buisson-Sonef; and prudence bade him take shelter behind a deed executed by Madame de Lamotte of her own free will.

On February 27th, he went to her solicitor on Rue du Paon, and made a demand, ostensibly from her, for her husband's power of attorney, supporting the demand with most cunningly devised explanations. He said that he had paid privately a hundred thousand livres on account of the purchase money, and that that amount was deposited with a notary. The solicitor was amazed that an affair of such importance should have been concluded without advising with him; he declared that he would not deliver the power except to M. de Lamotte or his wife, and asked why she did not come herself to get it.

Derues replied that she was at Versailles, whither he proposed to send the document. He persisted in his demand, and the attorney refused no less persistently. At last Derues withdrew, saying that he would force him to give up the power. He actually did present a petition the same day to the civil lieutenant, in the name of Cyrano Derues de Bury; he set forth his transactions with Madame de Lamotte based upon her husband's power of attorney, and prayed that that document might be seized and taken from the custody of him in whose hands it was.

The prayer of his petition was granted. The solicitor, when summoned, declared that he could not deliver the power except to Monsieur or Madame de Lamotte, unless otherwise ordered. Derues boldly appealed again to the civil lieutenant sitting in chambers, but for reasons assigned by that magistrate the matter was adjourned.

These two unsuccessful attempts might have compromised Derues if they had transpired at Buisson-Sonef, but everything seemed to work in favor of the villain; neither the boarding-school mistress nor the solicitor thought of writing to M. de Lamotte. He, although unsuspicious, was nevertheless harassed by other causes of anxiety, and was tied to the house by sickness.

In our day, distances are much shorter than they used to be, and the journey from Villeneuve-le-Roi-lez-Sens to Paris can be made in a few hours. It was not so in 1777; private commerce and enterprise were still fast bound by the bonds of routine, and had not felt the necessity for means of swift communication. It took half a day to go from Paris to Versailles; a journey of twenty leagues required at least two days and a night, and was attended with delays and annoyances of all kinds. This difficulty of traveling, which was greatly increased in the stormy season, and a long, severe attack of the gout, explain how it came about that M. de Lamotte, who, as we have seen, was so quick to take alarm, had been separated from his wife from the middle of December to the end of February. He had received letters from her calculated to keep his mind at ease; the first were written freely and simply, but he thought he could detect a gradual change in the later ones. It seemed to him as if they came from the mind rather than the heart. Unmeaning protestations of affection, which have no place in letters between a husband and wife who love each other sincerely and know it, were clothed in language which was natural only on the surface. M. de Lamotte remarked and exaggerated these peculiarities, and although he strove to persuade himself that he was wrong, he could not throw off the thought of

them, nor recover his usual tranquillity. He was almost ashamed of his weakness, and had forborne to communicate his fears to anyone.

One morning, as he was buried in a capacious easy chair near the fire, the door of the salon opened and gave entrance to the curate, who was amazed to find him so dejected and pale and thin.

"Pray, what is the matter?" he asked; "did you have a bad night?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Well! what news from Paris?"

"None for a week; it's strange, isn't it?"

"I am still hoping that this sale will not be carried out; it has been dragging on too long, and I believe that M. Derues is not so well supplied with funds as he pretends, notwithstanding what your wife wrote you a month ago. Do you know that it's said that Madame Derues' kinsman, M. Despeignes Duplessis, whose heir she is, was murdered?"

"How do you know that?"

"It's common talk in the country thereabout, and was told here by a man who recently came from Beauvais."

"Do they know the murderers?"

"It seems that the police have not succeeded in getting on their track."

M. de Lamotte hung his head, and his face assumed a pained, thoughtful expression, as if these words concerned him personally.

"Frankly," continued the curate, "my opinion is that you will continue to own Buisson-Sonef and that I shall not have the pain of ordering another name than yours written over your pew in Villeneuve church."

"The matter must be settled within a very few days, for I can wait no longer. If it isn't M. Derues it will

be some other purchaser. What makes you think that he hasn't the money?"

"Why," said the curate, "when a man has money he pays his debts, or he is a scoundrel, and God forbid that I should suspect his honesty."

"What do you know of him?"

"You remember Brother Marchois of the Camaldules, who came to visit me last spring, and was here when M. Derues arrived with your wife and Edouard?"

"Perfectly. What then?"

"Well, when I wrote him in one of my letters that M. Derues was proposing to purchase Buisson-Sonef, and that the arrangements were nearly concluded, Brother Marchois at once wrote and begged me to remind him that he owes their community eight hundred livres, of which they haven't yet received a sou."

"Ah! perhaps I should have done better not to allow myself to be persuaded by his fine promises. The man has honey on his lips. When one once consents to listen to him, it is impossible to refuse to do what he wants. I wish I had dealt with some other purchaser."

"Is that what worries you and makes you so thoughtful?"

"That and something else."

"What else, pray?"

"I am almost ashamed to confess that I am becoming as fearful and suspicious as an old woman. Answer me and don't laugh at me too much. Do you believe in dreams?"

"Monsieur," said the curate, smiling, "you must never ask a coward: 'Are you afraid?' for you tempt him to lie. He will say no, and think yes."

"And are you a coward, father?"

"A bit of a one. I don't exactly believe in the tales

old women tell, or in the favorable or pernicious influence of this or that object that may appear to us during sleep; but—"

The sound of footsteps approaching interrupted him; a servant appeared and announced the arrival of M. Derues.

At the name M. de Lamotte felt disturbed in spite of himself; but he soon overcame the feeling and went out to greet him.

"Remain," he said to the curate, who was preparing to take his leave, "remain; we are not likely to have anything to say that you may not hear."

Derues entered the salon, and after the usual greetings took his seat in the chimney corner facing M. de Lamotte.

"You did not expect me," he said, "and I ask your pardon for taking you by surprise."

"Tell me something of my wife," rejoined M. de Lamotte eagerly.

"She never was in better health. Your son, too, is perfectly well."

"Why do you come alone? Why did not Marie come with you? It's six weeks since she went away."

"She hasn't yet concluded the business you entrusted to her. I am somewhat to blame myself for her long absence, but we can't push such matters as fast as we would like. However, you have doubtless heard from her that everything is settled between us, or nearly so. A new deed has been executed, which annuls our earlier agreements, and I have paid her one hundred thousand livres."

"I cannot understand," said M. de Lamotte, "what motive my wife could have had for saying nothing to me—"

"You know nothing of it?"

"Nothing whatever. I was just now expressing to Monsieur le Curé my surprise at her silence."

"Madame de Lamotte was to have written you, and I can't conceive what prevented her."

"When did you leave her?"

"Several days ago. I was not at Paris; I am just returning from Chartres. I supposed, monsieur, that you knew all about it."

For some moments M. de Lamotte did not reply. At last, gazing earnestly at Derues' impassive face, he said in a voice that trembled with emotion:

"You are a husband and father, monsieur; in the name of that twofold affection with which you yourself are familiar, hide nothing from me. I can't help thinking that some misfortune has befallen my wife, and that you are hiding it from me."

Derues' features expressed a perfectly natural astonishment.

"What can give you such an idea as that, monsieur?"

As he spoke, he glanced carelessly at the curate, to make sure whether M. de Lamotte was himself responsible for the suspicion, or whether it was inspired by the clergyman. The glance was so rapid that the others did not notice it. Like all rascals, whose very rascality compels them to be always on their guard, Derues possessed in an eminent degree the art of seeing what was going on about him without seeming to look. He judged that he had only to combat a mere suspicion, not based upon any evidence, and he waited until he should be pressed more closely.

"I don't know what took place during my absence," he said; "pray, explain yourself, monsieur, or you will infect me with your anxiety."

"Yes, I am anxious in the extreme. Tell me the truth, I implore you. Explain this silence and this prolongation of her absence beyond all expectation. You completed your business with Madame de Lamotte some days ago; once more, why doesn't she write to me? No letter from her! none from my son! To-morrow I will send someone to Paris."

"*Mon Dieu!*" rejoined Derues, "can there be no other explanation of her absence than an accident? Well," he added, with the embarrassed air of a man from whom one forces a confidence, "I see that there is no way to set your mind at rest except to betray the secret that was confided to me."

He went on to tell M. de Lamotte that his wife was not in Paris; that she was at Versailles, seeking to obtain a position as honorable as it was lucrative; that her purpose in leaving him in ignorance of her plans was to surprise him the more agreeably. He added that she had taken her son away from the boarding-school, and was seeking to obtain a place for him at the riding-school or among the king's pages. To confirm what he said, he produced from his traveling-bag the letter Edouard wrote him in reply to the one we have quoted.

All this was said straightforwardly and with an accent of good faith which was altogether convincing to the curate. In M. de Lamotte's eyes the project ascribed to his wife did not lack probability. Derues had learned indirectly that they had sometimes discussed that as a possible career for Edouard. And yet, although in his state of ignorance M. de Lamotte could offer no serious objection, the explanation did not do away with his fears. He seemed, however, to be content with it.

"What you tell us certainly ought to put an end to these gloomy ideas," said the curate. "When you were

announced just now, M. de Lamotte was confiding his anxiety to me. I was no less surprised than he, and I could think of nothing to say to console him. Never did visitor arrive more seasonably. Well, my good friend, you see what is left of your chimeras now. What were you saying to me when M. Derues came in? Ah! I remember, we were just entering upon a discussion of the subject of dreams; you asked me if I believed in them."

M. de Lamotte, who had sunk back in his chair, and seemed deeply absorbed in thought, started at the words. He raised his head and looked at Derues again. But he had had time to notice the effect of the curate's words, and this fresh scrutiny did not disconcert him.

"Yes," said M. de Lamotte, "I did ask you that question."

"I was about to reply that the soul may receive secret warnings of events long before the body—revelations of things which seem at first to be impossible, but which eventually are seen to be connected with realities, of which they were simply the heralds. Is that your opinion, Monsieur Derues?"

"I have no opinion on the subject, and I leave others more learned than myself to discuss it. I don't know whether such apparitions do or do not signify anything, and I don't seek to solve mysteries which are above man's apprehension."

"Nevertheless," said the curate, "we must admit their existence, without understanding or explaining them, like many other everlasting truths. I conform to this precept to be found in the Imitation of Jesus Christ:

"'Refrain, my son, from prying curiously into things which pass your understanding.'

"And so I submit, and do not seek to lift the veil.

Of how many marvelous things that we can neither see nor touch are our souls conscious? I say again, there are facts which cannot be denied."

Derues listened attentively, and kept his eyes open. Without knowing why, he dreaded to allow himself to be drawn into this conversation as if it were a trap to catch him. He noticed that M. de Lamotte's eyes never left his face.

The curate continued:

"Here is an instance which I certainly ought to consider conclusive, as it happened to myself. I was twenty years old at the time. My mother lived in the outskirts of Tours, and I was at the seminary at Montpellier. After we had been separated several years I obtained leave to go and see her. I wrote her the good news, and received a reply overflowing with affection and delight. My brother and sister were to be notified, and we were to have a family reunion, a regular holiday. I set out with my heart filled with pleasant anticipations. I was so impatient, that after taking supper at a village inn about ten leagues from Tours, I would not wait until the next morning and go by stage, but started off on foot and walked all night. About an hour after sunrise I saw the smoke rising from the chimneys in the village which was my destination, and I quickened my pace in order to surprise my family a few seconds sooner. I never in all my life felt happier or more light-hearted; around me and before me I saw nothing but smiling faces. At the corner of a hedge I found myself face to face with a peasant whom I recognized. Suddenly a mist came before my eyes; my joy, my hopes, everything disappeared; I was overcome with a foreboding of evil, and I said to the man, who had not yet spoken to me,—I said to him, taking his hand:

"'My mother is dead; I am sure that my mother is dead!'

"He bowed his head and replied:

"'She is to be buried this morning.'

"Whence came that revelation to me? I had seen no one, spoken to no one; a moment before I suspected nothing."

Derues expressed his wonder by a gesture. M. de Lamotte hastily put his hand over his eyes, and said to the curate:

"Your presentiments came true, but mine fortunately have no foundation in fact. But listen, and say whether, in my present state of agitation and anxiety, I am not justly terrified and in dread of some baleful event."

He fixed his eyes again upon Derues.

"Last night I succeeded in dropping into a doze about midnight, but my sleep was so broken that it fatigued rather than rested me. I kept hearing confused noises all about me, and was constantly dazzled by brilliant flashes of light; then for a moment all would be dark and still again. Sometimes it seemed to me as if someone were weeping beside my bed, and plaintive voices calling me in the darkness. I stretched out my arms and found nothing; I struggled against the visions, but at last I felt an icy hand seize mine and drag me swiftly away. In a dark, damp hole a woman lay bleeding and lifeless; it was my wife! At the same moment I heard groaning behind me, and turned my head; a man was in the act of stabbing my son with a dagger. I cried aloud and awoke, bathed in cold sweat and gasping with horror at the frightful sight. I had to leave my bed, to walk about and speak aloud, in order to assure myself that it was only a dream. I tried to sleep again, but the same vision pursued me. I constantly saw the same

man armed with two daggers dripping blood, and heard the shrieks of his two victims. When day broke I was completely prostrated; and you could judge from my condition this morning, father, what effect the fearful night had upon me."

During this relation Derues' self-possession did not desert him for one instant, and the most skillful physiognomist could not have detected any other expression upon his face than incredulous curiosity.

"Monsieur le Curé's story made an impression upon me," he said, "but yours makes me as uncertain as ever. I am even less able than before to venture an opinion on the grave question of dreams, because the second example neutralizes the first."

"Indeed," returned the curate, "it is hardly possible to draw any conclusion from the two, for they are contradictory, and the best thing we can do is to select some less funereal subject of conversation."

"Monsieur Derues," said M. de Lamotte, "if you are not fatigued by your journey, do you care to go with me and inspect the latest improvements I have made? It is for you to approve them now, for I shall soon be your guest here."

"As I was yours for a long while, and I trust that you will often give me an opportunity to show my hospitality. But you are not well, and the air is cold and damp; if you don't care to go out, don't discommode yourself for me, but stay by the fire with Monsieur le Curé. Thank God, I need nobody's arm to lean on; I will go to the park, and will return at once and give you my opinion. We have time enough to talk about all these things, you know. With your permission, I expect to remain some days."

"I count upon your doing so."

He left the room considerably disquieted by the reception he had met with, by M. de Lamotte's fears, and by the way he watched him while he was speaking. He strode through the park at a great pace.

"I have made a mistake perhaps; I have lost twelve or fifteen days, and the fear of omitting some necessary precaution delayed me out of all reason. But then, how could I imagine that this simple-minded creature, so easy to deceive, would take it into his head to become suspicious? What a strange dream, too! if I hadn't been on my guard I might have shown some confusion. Come, come, I must put such things out of his head and give him something else to think about."

He stopped short in his walk, reflected a few moments, then started back toward the house.

As soon as he left the salon, M. de Lamotte leaned over to the curate and said:

"He didn't show the least emotion, did he?"

"Not the least."

"He didn't start when I spoke of the man armed with two daggers?"

"No. Pray, put away such thoughts; you see that you are wrong."

"But I haven't told you the whole of it, father; this murderer whom I saw in my dream was he!* I know as well as you do that it's all imaginary; I saw as you did that he was perfectly calm; but, do what I will, I cannot get away from that frightful dream. I beg you not to listen to me—don't allow me to speak to you of it again, and make me blush for myself."

During Derues' stay at Buisson-Sonef, M. de Lamotte received several letters from his wife, some from

* It is a fact that M. de Lamotte was so tormented by frightful dreams in which he constantly saw Derues armed with two daggers, that he made up his mind to go to Paris.

Paris and some from Versailles. She always wrote that both she and her son were in perfect health. Her writing was so cleverly imitated that not the slightest doubt of its genuineness was possible. And yet her husband's suspicions increased in intensity from day to day, and he ended by forcing the curate to share his fears. He therefore refused to go to Paris with Derues, although he urged him most persistently to do so. Derues was alarmed by his cold treatment of him, and left Buisson-Sonef, announcing his purpose to take possession about the middle of spring.

M. de Lamotte's ill health still detained him at home sorely against his will. But a new, inexplicable circumstance made him resolve to go to Paris at all hazards, to clear up the mystery which surrounded the fate of his wife and son. He received an anonymous letter in an unfamiliar hand, wherein Madame de Lamotte's reputation seemed to be assailed, rather by what was left unsaid, and it was darkly hinted that she had been false to her conjugal obligations; that therein lay the real cause of her long absence. He placed no faith in this anonymous denunciation, but the fate of the two beings who were dearer than all the world to him was involved in such obscurity that he could hesitate no longer; he started for Paris.

His refusal to go thither with Derues saved his life. The crime the villain contemplated was impracticable at Buisson-Sonef; only at Paris could his victim be made to disappear without attracting attention. Having perforce to let his prey go, he undertook to lead him into a labyrinth where he would lose all trace of the truth. He already had his plans laid, and began by summoning calumny to his assistance, and by preparing the impudent falsehood which might justify him, if any charge

should be made against him. He had hoped that M. de Lamotte would throw himself into his net without resistance; but a careful calculation of his position, and the absolute impossibility of postponing for long the inevitable investigation, made him change his whole plan of operations and resort to an infernal stratagem, so cleverly contrived as to outwit all human sagacity.

M. de Lamotte reached Paris early in March. By the merest chance he took lodgings on Rue de la Mortellerie, in a house close by the one where his wife's body was buried. He called at Derues' house, meaning to take him by surprise, and determined to force him to speak. His wife (was she his discreet accomplice, or was she really ignorant of his whereabouts?) declared that she did not know where he could be found. She said that he told her nothing of his business, and that M. de Lamotte might have noticed during their visit at Buisson that she never questioned him, but yielded to his wishes in everything (which was quite true); that he went away without telling her where he was going. She agreed that Madame de Lamotte had staid with them six weeks, and that she then went to Versailles, but since then she knew nothing about her.

All M. de Lamotte's questions, entreaties and threats failed to elicit any other reply from her. He then called upon the solicitor, Rue du Paon, and upon the master of the boarding-school; these visits left him in the same state of ignorance and uncertainty. His wife and his son had gone to Versailles, but at that point the thread that might have guided him in his search broke off.

He went to Versailles but found no one there to give him any information; the very name of Lamotte was unknown there. He returned to Paris and questioned,

or had others question, the people in the neighborhood and the landlord of the Hotel de France, where his wife staid on her first trip to the capital. At last, worn out by his prolonged fruitless efforts, he called upon the authorities for assistance. At that point his complaints ceased; he was advised to maintain a discreet silence and await the return of Derues.

The latter was perfectly well aware, after the failure of his attempts to allay M. de Lamotte's fears, that he had no time to lose and that the fictitious deed of February 12th would not be sufficient to establish the existence of Françoise Perrier. Let us see how he employed his time while the wretched husband was engaged in his fruitless investigations.

On March 12th, a woman with her face covered by the hood of her cloak, which was of the pattern called at that time the *Thérèse*, called at the office of Master N—, a notary at Lyon. She said that her name was Marie Françoise Perrier, wife of Monsieur Saint-Faust de Lamotte, but living apart from him. She requested that a power of attorney be prepared authorizing her husband to receive thirty thousand livres which remained due on account of the sale of an estate called Buisson-Sonef, located near Villeneuve-le-Roi-lez-Sens. The power was drawn up and signed by Madame de Lamotte in presence of the notary and one of his brethren.

This woman was Derues. The reader will remember that he did not arrive at Buisson until February 28th, and remained there several days; it is hard to realize how a journey so long as that from Paris to Lyon could have been made so quickly in those days, but fear lent him wings. We propose now to tell what course he undertook to pursue, and what a masterpiece of astute falsehood he had invented.

On his return to Paris he found a summons to appear before the lieutenant-general of police. He anticipated it, and obeyed it without apparent embarrassment, expressing his readiness to reply to any questions whatsoever. M. de Lamotte was present. It was a formal examination.

The magistrate asked him first of all why he left Paris.

"Monsieur," he replied, "I have nothing to conceal, and no act of mine need fear the daylight; but before entering into any explanations, I desire to understand my position here. As a resident bourgeois of Paris I have a right to ask that question. Be kind enough therefore to inform me for what reason I am cited to appear before you; is it for something affecting myself personally, or simply to give you information touching some matter of which I may have some knowledge?"

"You know who monsieur is, and therefore you must know what questions we may wish to ask you."

"I have not the slightest idea."

"First of all, answer my first question. Why did you leave Paris? Where did you go?"

"I went away on business."

"What business?"

"I decline to answer further."

"Be careful! you are under grave suspicion, and your silence will not tend to clear you from it."

Derues hung his head with an air of resignation.

"Villain!" cried M. de Lamotte, in whose eyes this embarrassed attitude was a tacit confession of his crime; "villain! what have you done with my wife and son?"

"Your son!" said Derues slowly, in a most significant tone. Then he looked down at the floor again.

The magistrate who had undertaken to examine him was struck both by the expression of his face and by

the partial reply, which seemed to conceal some mystery and to have been designed to divert his attention by offering a bait to his curiosity. He might have checked Derues just as he was preparing perhaps to plunge into some devious path, and have forced him to be as clear and precise in his replies as M. de Lamotte was in his question; but he thought that the latter's questions, unforeseen, passionate, pressing, would be more likely to derange a prepared defense than his own skillful but unimpassioned tactics. He changed his plan and contented himself for the moment with the rôle of observer. The game was on between two well-matched opponents.

"I demand that you tell me what has become of them," repeated M. de Lamotte. "I have been to Versailles, where you said that they were."

"I told you the truth, monsieur."

"No one saw them there, no one knows them. And here all trace of them is lost. Monsieur magistrate, this man must reply; he must tell me what has become of my wife and son!"

"I understand your grief, and pardon your anxiety; but why do you apply to me? why do you suppose that I know what has happened to them?"

"Because I entrusted them to you."

"As a friend, yes, I agree to that. It is true that in December last I was notified by you by letter of the arrival of your wife and son. I received them under my own roof, and repaid to them the hospitality I had received at your hands. I saw them, your son frequently, your wife every day until she left me to go to Versailles; and I took Edouard to her there, as she was negotiating for a position for him. All this I have already told you, and I say it again because it's the truth. You believed me; why do you refuse to believe

me now? what is there strange and inexplicable about my words? If your wife and son have disappeared, am I responsible for them? Did you transfer your authority over them to me? And in what way do you demand an explanation from me to-day, monsieur? Do you apply to me as to a friend who might sympathize with you and assist you in your search? Do you come and confide your grief to me, and ask me to counsel or comfort you? No, you accuse me; and, that being so, I refuse to speak, monsieur, because an honest man is not to be accused without evidence, because mere fears, whether real or fancied, are not enough to justify casting all sorts of hateful suspicions upon an unstained reputation, and because I have the right to take offence at such an insult. Monsieur," he added, turning to the magistrate, "I believe that you will appreciate my moderation, and will permit me to withdraw. If charges are preferred against me, I shall always be ready to meet them, and show them to be without foundation. I shall not leave Paris; I have no more business that requires my presence elsewhere."

He uttered these last words with the evident intention that they should be noticed. They did not escape the magistrate, who asked him at once:

"What do you mean by that?"

"Nothing more than what I say, monsieur. May I go?"

"No, remain; you pretend not to understand."

"What I don't understand is why you do not speak openly."

M. de Lamotte rose to his feet, exclaiming:

"Openly! what more must we do to force you to reply? My wife and my son have disappeared. It isn't true that they have been at Versailles as you said. You

deceived me at my own house at Buisson-Sonef, as you are deceiving me now and trying to deceive the magistrate by repeating your falsehoods. Where are they? What have you done with them? I am oppressed by all the fears that a husband and father can conceive; I have a foreboding of the most frightful calamities, and I charge you to your face with their death! Is that enough, monsieur? Will you still say that I do not speak openly?"

Derues turned to the lieutenant of police.

"Is that enough to cause my prosecution, if I give no sufficient explanation?"

"Yes, of course it is; you should have thought of that sooner."

"And so, monsieur," he said to M. de Lamotte, "you persist in this grave accusation?"

"I do."

"You have forgotten our former friendship, and broken all the ties that bound us? I am, in your eyes, naught but a scoundrel, an assassin? My silence is suspicious to you, and you will ruin me if I don't speak?"

"Yes."

"There is still time; reflect, monsieur. I will overlook your anger and your insults. Your trouble is great enough, without my adding to it by my reproaches. But do you wish me to speak? do you absolutely wish it?"

"I do."

"Very well! let it be as you wish."

He looked at M. de Lamotte with an expression which seemed to say: "I am sorry for you." "Monsieur le Lieutenant," he added with a sigh, "now I am ready to reply; be good enough to begin your questions once more."

Derues had succeeded in securing an advantageous position. If he had launched out at once with the extraordinary romance he had invented, the improbability of it could not have failed to impress the blindest eyes; at every sentence it would have been evident that he felt the necessity of justifying himself at all hazards. It was different, however, after he had struggled to avoid defending himself until he was actually forced to do so by M. de Lamotte's passion. This refusal to speak, on the part of a man who thereby endangered his own safety, had an appearance of generosity, and would infallibly, by arousing the magistrate's curiosity, prepare his mind for mysterious and peculiar revelations. That was what Derues desired; he awaited with perfect tranquillity the first question.

The lieutenant-general of police again asked him:

"Why did you leave Paris?"

"I have already had the honor to inform you that important business made my absence unavoidable."

"But you refused to say what the business was. Do you still refuse?'

"At this moment, yes; but I will explain myself directly."

"Where did you go? whence have you just returned?"

"I went to Lyon, and I am just from there."

"What called you there?"

"I will tell you later."

"In December last Madame de Lamotte came to Paris with her son?"

"She did."

"And they both lodged at your house?"

"I have no reason to conceal it."

"Yet her original purpose, as well as her husband's,

was not that she should accept accommodation under your roof."

"That is true, monsieur. We had important business to transact together; Madame de Lamotte feared that some controversy on money matters might arise between us; that was the reason she gave me. She was wrong, as the event proved, for I intended to pay her, and did pay her. But perhaps she had another reason that she didn't choose to tell me."

"It was the suspicion this man inspired!" cried M. de Lamotte.

Derues looked at him with a sad smile.

"Hush, monsieur," said the magistrate, "do not interrupt." "Another reason?"—this to Derues—"what do you think it was?"

"Perhaps the desire to be more free to receive whom she chose."

"What's that?"

"It's only a supposition on my part, and I don't insist upon it."

"But it seemed to convey an insinuation against Madame de Lamotte's good name."

"No! oh, no!" replied Derues after a moment's pause.

This veiled innuendo seemed strange to the questioner. He determined to press him until he forced him to abandon the insulting reticence behind which he took shelter. With a gesture he enjoined silence once more upon M. de Lamotte, and went on, quite unaware that he was being outgeneraled by the clever tactics of the accused, who drew him on and on, constantly falling back before him, and that every moment of time he gave him was a distinct advantage to him.

"At all events, whatever Madame de Lamotte's reasons

may have been, she did take up her abode with you? How did you persuade her?"

"In the first place my wife went with her to the Hotel de France, and afterwards to various other hotels. I had not urged her beyond what a friend might venture to do, and did not seek to detain her against her will. When I returned home I was amazed to find her there with her son. She had been unable to find rooms at the houses where she applied, and so she accepted my offer."

"What day was this?"

"Monday, December 16th last."

"What day did she leave your house?"

"February 1st."

"The concierge cannot recall seeing her go out that day."

"That may well be. Madame de Lamotte went and came as her business required. The concierge knew her, and took no more notice of her than of any other regular occupant of the house."

"The man declares that he knows that she was sick and confined to her room for some days prior to the first."

"So she was, with a slight indisposition which amounted to nothing—so trifling that it wasn't necessary to call in a physician. Madame de Lamotte seemed anxious and absorbed, and I think that her trouble in that direction affected her health."

"Did you escort her to Versailles?"

"No, I joined her there later."

"What evidence have you of her stay in that place?"

"None, unless it is a letter I received from her."

"You told M. de Lamotte that she was actively engaged trying to secure a position for her son at the riding-school or among the pages; but no one has seen her or heard of her."

"I said so, because she told me so."

"Where were her lodgings?"

"I don't know."

"What! she wrote to you and you went to see her, and you don't know where she was living?"

"That is the fact."

"It isn't possible."

"There are many other things that would seem impossible if I should mention them, but they are true none the less."

"Will you explain yourself?"

"I received but one letter from Madame de Lamotte, in which she spoke of her plans concerning Edouard, and asked me to send her son to her on a certain day. I communicated her plans to Edouard. As I was unable to go to his school to see him, I wrote him to know if he would like to quit his studies and become one of the king's pages. When I was last at Buisson-Sonef, I showed the boy's reply to M. de Lamotte. This is it, monsieur."

He handed a letter to the magistrate, who read it and gave it to M. de Lamotte.

"Did you and do you now recognize your son's handwriting?"

"Perfectly, monsieur."

"You went with Edouard to Versailles? on what day?"

"February 11th, Mardi-Gras. It was the only time I went to Versailles. You may believe the contrary; I may have been heard to say that after she left my house I saw Madame de Lamotte often, that I knew all that she did, and that the confidential and friendly relations between us were not interrupted. If I said that, I told

a falsehood, and acted in opposition to the practice of my whole life."

This self-laudation seemed to produce an unfavorable impression upon the magistrate. Derues detected it, and tried to do away with it by adding:

"You will understand my conduct better when you know the whole story. I mistook the meaning of Madame de Lamotte's letter. She requested me to bring her son to her; I thought that that meant that she would be glad to have me go with him and not leave him to make the journey alone, so he and I went together. We reached Versailles about the middle of the day, and as we alighted from the coach I saw Madame de Lamotte in front of the castle gate. I noticed at once, to my great astonishment, that my presence did not please her. She was not alone—"

He paused, although it was evident that he was close upon the most interesting portion of his narrative.

"Go on," said the lieutenant of police; "why do you stop?"

"What I have to say is of such a painful nature, not for me, who am forced to justify myself, but for others, that I am still reluctant to proceed."

"Say on."

"Question me, monsieur."

"Very well; what took place at that interview?"

He seemed to reflect for a moment, then said, as one who had at last determined to divulge everything:

"Madame de Lamotte was not alone; the person with her was a man whom I did not know; I never saw him at Buisson-Sonef or at Paris, and I have never laid eyes on him since that day. I beg you to allow me to tell the whole story in detail. This man's face attracted my attention at once, because of a very striking resemblance

to some one; he took no notice of me during the first few moments, and I had ample time to examine him. His manners denoted that he was accustomed to the best society, and his dress betokened wealth. When he saw Edouard, he said to Madame de Lamotte:

"'So this is he!'

"Then he embraced him affectionately. That action and the joy which he made no attempt to conceal surprised me, and I looked at Madame de Lamotte, who thereupon said to me coldly:

"'I didn't expect to see you, Monsieur Derues. I didn't ask you to come with my son.'

"Edouard was no less astonished than I. The stranger eyed me with haughty displeasure, but when he saw that I did not lower my eyes before his, his features assumed a more amiable expression, and Madame de Lamotte presented me to him as the person who took such a deep interest in Edouard."

"This is a tissue of lies!" cried M. de Lamotte.

"Let me finish, monsieur," rejoined Derues. "I can understand your doubts, and you are under no obligation to believe what I say, but I am called upon by you to tell the truth, and I propose to tell it. Then the two accusations can be put in the scales, and a choice made between them. The reputation of a man of honor is as sacred and worthy of preservation as a woman's, and I have never heard that virtue was any less fragile in the one than in the other."

M. de Lamotte was excited beyond measure by this revelation, and could not contain his wrathful impatience.

"Look you!" he said; "that explains an anonymous letter I received containing foul aspersions upon my wife's honor; it was written to lend an air of probability

to this infamous story; it's a villainous plot, and it may have been this fellow who wrote the letter."

"I know nothing of it," retorted Derues quietly. "The explanation which you claim to have found, I hope to supply in the shape of a fact I was about to mention. I didn't know that you had already been notified in secret; now that you tell me of it, I can quite understand that such a letter might have been written you. As you were already warned, monsieur, you ought to listen to me more patiently, and not cry imposture at the first word."

As he spoke he was putting together in his mind the lie made necessary by this interruption; but no movement of his features betrayed his thoughts. He carried himself with natural dignity, and as he saw clearly enough that the magistrate, despite his keensightedness and his long experience in reading the most cunning faces, had not yet uncovered any of his ruses, and was going astray in the labyrinth of his long narrative, he resumed with increased confidence:

"You know that during the year and more that I had been acquainted with M. de Lamotte, I had come to believe that his friendship for me was as sincere as mine for him. As his friend it did not become me to welcome with indifference the suspicion which came into my mind; I could not conceal my surprise. Madame de Lamotte noticed it, and guessed from my looks that I was not satisfied with the explanation she tried to impose upon me. She exchanged an almost imperceptible signal with the man, who still held Edouard's hand. The weather was cold but fine, and she proposed a walk in the park. I gave her my arm and the stranger walked some distance in front of us with Edouard. We had a very brief conversation, which is engraved on my memory:

"'Why did you come?' she asked me.

"I made no reply, but gazed sternly at her in a way to trouble her conscience.

"'You should have written me, madame,' I said at length, 'that my presence would be unwelcome.'

"She seemed much embarrassed, and exclaimed:

"'I am lost! I see that you have guessed everything, and you will inform my husband. I am very unfortunate, and a single misstep bears hard upon a woman throughout her life. Listen to me, Monsieur Derues, listen to me, in pity's name; this man whom you see—I will not tell you who he is, I will not tell you his name—I once loved; I was to have become his wife, and I should have had no other husband than he, if he had not been obliged to leave France.'"

M. de Lamotte started in his seat, and turned pale as death.

"What is it, monsieur?" inquired the lieutenant of police.

"Oh! the villain abuses secrets which his long intimacy with the family enabled him to learn. Don't believe him, monsieur, don't believe him!"

"Madame de Lamotte added," continued Derues, "'I saw him again sixteen years ago, still outlawed, still obliged to remain in hiding; and now he has reappeared in the world under a name that is not his own, and wishes to force me to share his fortunes. He demanded that I send for Edouard; but I will escape from him. To explain my stay here I invented the story that my son was soon to join the pages. Do not give me the lie, but save me; for some little time ago, I met one of M. de Lamotte's friends, and I fear that his suspicions were aroused. Say that you have seen me several times; say, as long as you did come, that you brought Edouard

to me. I shall return to Buisson at the earliest possible moment; but do you go there and see my husband; set his mind at rest if he has any fears. I put myself in your hands, Monsieur Derues, my honor, my reputation, my life! you can ruin me, or help me to save myself. I am guilty, but not bad at heart; I weep for my sin every day, and I have cruelly expiated it.'"

This execrable slanderous falsehood was not told without divers interruptions from M. de Lamotte. He could but agree, however, in his own mind, that Marie Perrier's hand was once promised to a man who was driven into exile by some unsavory affair, and whom he had supposed to be dead. This pretended disclosure from the mouth of Derues, who was so deeply interested in concealing the truth, was not sufficient to convince him of his dishonor, or to stifle his natural feelings as a husband and father; but Derues was not talking for his benefit alone. What seemed impossible to M. de Lamotte might seem much less so to the cooler and more dispassionate judgment of the magistrate.

"I was wrong," he went on, "to allow myself to be moved by her tears, wrong to believe in her repentance, and to go to Buisson to allay her husband's anxiety. But I refused to comply with her wishes except upon conditions; she promised me to return to Paris very soon; she swore that her son should never know the truth, and that the rest of her life should be passed in earning forgetfulness of her errors by unremitting devotion to her duty. She begged me to leave her, and said that she would write me at Paris to advise me of her return.

"That is all that took place between us, monsieur; that is why I went to Buisson, and why I told the falsehoods that I did. I might with a word have put an end to happiness of seventeen years' duration, but I did not

choose to do so. I believed in her remorse; I believe in it still, and in spite of appearances I refused to speak to-day; I did my utmost to prolong a delusion, the destruction of which, I know, will be a frightful thing."

For a moment there was silence. This fiendishly ingenious fabrication was narrated in a tone of unaffected earnestness and with an air of candor well calculated to impose upon the lieutenant-general of police, or at least to arouse a feeling of doubt in his mind. With his customary cunning Derues selected his language to fit the kind of man who was listening to him. Cant, and affectation of piety, and quotations from sacred books, with which he was lavish when he was dealing with less knowing individuals, would have aroused suspicion at once. He knew enough to abstain from anything of the kind, and was so proficient in the art of deceiving that he could at need entirely lay aside all appearance of hypocrisy. He stated all the facts circumstantially, and while it was true that there was no evidence to support this unexpected charge, there was a possible foundation of fact, which was not absolutely improbable either.

The magistrate made him repeat his statement in detail, but could not detect him in the slightest contradiction, or embarrass him in the least degree. While he was questioning him, he kept his eyes fixed upon him, and as this twofold examination was absolutely barren of results, he was more perplexed than ever. He did not alter the stern incredulity of his demeanor, however, or the threatening harshness of his tone.

"You admit," he said, "that you have been at Lyon?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"You said at the beginning of your examination

that you would explain the purpose of your journey thither later on."

"I am ready to do it now, for it was connected with the facts I have set before you; it was one result of them."

"Say on."

"Once more I ask your permission to leave nothing unsaid. I received no letters from Versailles; I feared that M. de Lamotte would be anxious and would come to Paris. Being bound by my promise to his wife to divert suspicion and to argue him out of the fears he might have, and—shall I confess it?—considering furthermore how important it was for me to advise him of our new agreement and of the payment of a hundred thousand francs—"

"Surely there was no such payment," M. de Lamotte broke in; "it must be proved."

"I will furnish the proof directly," said Derues. "So I went to Buisson, as I have already told you. On my return I found a letter from Madame de Lamotte awaiting me; a letter posted in Paris and that had arrived that very morning. I was much surprised that she should write to me when she was in the same city; I opened the letter and my surprise was even greater. I haven't the letter with me, but I remember perfectly the substance of it, if not the very words, and I will produce it, if called upon to do so. Madame de Lamotte was at Lyon with her son and the person whose name I cannot give, and whom I regret to mention in monsieur's presence. She entrusted the letter to some one who was setting out for Paris and agreed to deliver it, but he, a man named Marquis, sent a line with it to say that he was obliged to start back again at once and had no time to do more than to put it in the post. The letter was to

this effect, substantially. Madame de Lamotte said that she was obliged to go with that person to Lyon. She begged me to write her concerning her husband and her affairs; but not a word did she say of her return.

"I was much disturbed to learn of her clandestine departure. I had in my hands nothing more than a bare memorandum of the agreement we had substituted for our previous one, in consideration of the payment of a hundred thousand livres; it was not a deed in due form, and was not sufficient; I knew that because a lawyer had already refused to deliver M. de Lamotte's power of attorney to me on the strength of it. I thought over all the embarrassment I was likely to suffer from her mysterious flight, and instead of writing I started for Lyon without a word to anyone. I was entirely in the dark as to whether Madame de Lamotte had changed her name as she did at Versailles, but, as luck would have it, I met her on the evening after my arrival.

"She was alone. She began to bewail her fate, and said that she was very wretched; that she was forced to go to Lyon with that person, but should soon be free and return to Paris. I was struck, however, by her very evident embarrassment. I told her that I would not leave her until I had obtained from her a deed carrying out our last arrangements. She refused at first, saying that it was unnecessary as she should return so soon; but I insisted with some heat, and added that I had already compromised myself for her sake by informing M. de Lamotte that she was at Versailles, negotiating for a place for her son; that, as she had been compelled to go to Lyon, the same person might take her elsewhere, that she might disappear, leave France, any day, without leaving any word behind her, or confessing on paper her own dishonor, and that when all her falsehoods were

discovered, I should seem to have been her accomplice. I impressed it upon her that as she had unfortunately boarded with me at Paris, and as she had sent me to take her son away from the boarding-school, I should inevitably be called upon to explain their disappearance, and might be accused of having caused it. I vowed at last that if she would not, willingly or unwillingly, give me some proof of her existence, I would appeal at once to a magistrate.

"My firmness seemed to make her reflect.

"'My dear Monsieur Derues,' she said, 'I pray you forgive me for all the trouble I have caused you. I will hand you the deed to-morrow, it is too late to-day. To-morrow, be at the place where I met you, and you shall see me again.'

"I hesitated, I confess, to let her go.

"'Ah!' she continued, seizing my hands, 'don't suspect me of desiring to deceive you! I swear that I will meet you here at four o'clock to-morrow. It is quite enough to have ruined my own life and my son's perhaps, without involving you in my sad fate. Yes, you are right; the deed is of the utmost importance to you, and you shall have it. But keep out of sight; if he should see you, I might perhaps be unable to do as I ought to do. Until to-morrow, I give you my word once more.'

"She left me. The next day, which was March 12th, I was on hand promptly at the appointed place; Madame de Lamotte arrived an instant after me. She handed me a power of attorney authorizing her husband to receive the balance of thirty thousand livres still due on account of the purchase of the estate of Buisson-Sonef. I undertook once more to reproach her on her conduct; she listened in silence as if my words touched her keenly. We walked along side by side; she said that she had an

errand in a certain house, and asked me to wait for her. I waited more than an hour; at last I discovered that this house, like many others at Lyons, had a passage-way which led to another street, and I realized that Madame de Lamotte had availed herself of it to give me the slip, and that it was useless for me to wait any longer. As I was entirely uncertain of my ability to find her again, and as it was clear, moreover, that remonstrance would avail nothing, I returned to Paris, determined even then to say nothing, and to hide the truth as long as I could. I was still hopeful; I did not anticipate being called upon so soon to defend myself, and I thought that when I did speak it would be as a friend and not as a person charged with crime. This, monsieur, is the explanation of my conduct. I regret extremely that this justification of myself, which is so simple a matter for me, should cause so much pain to another. You saw how earnestly I tried to avoid it."

M. de Lamotte listened to this second portion of Derues' narrative with less noisy indignation; not that he admitted the possibility of its being true, but he was stricken dumb by the monstrous imposture, by such overwhelming hypocrisy. His heart revolted at the thought of his wife's unfaithfulness; but while he rejected it with energetic scorn, he stood aghast at the contemplation of such fathomless depths of iniquity, in which he saw the confirmation of his presentiments and secret dread. He was pale and gasped for breath, as the guilty man should have done, and the tears were coursing down his cheeks. He tried to speak, but his voice would not come; he longed to throw the names of traitor and assassin in Derues' face, but he was fain to submit in silence to the pitying, sorrowful gaze which that worthy bestowed upon him.

The magistrate, calmer and with better self-control, but bewildered by this fagot of lies cleverly bound together, thought it his duty to put some further questions.

"How did you procure this sum of one hundred thousand livres which you claim to have paid to Madame de Lamotte?"

"I have been in business several years, and have saved some money."

"And yet you drew back several times from the obligation of making this payment. M. de Lamotte was somewhat alarmed about it, and it was largely on that account that his wife came to Paris."

"One may be somewhat embarrassed for a moment and soon get on his feet again."

"You say that you have a power of attorney which Madame de Lamotte gave you at Lyon to hand to her husband?"

"Here it is, monsieur."

The magistrate scrutinized it for some time, and took down the name of the notary in whose office it was executed.

"You may go," he said.

"What!" exclaimed M. de Lamotte.

Derues stopped; the magistrate motioned to him to go, informing him that he was forbidden to leave Paris.

"But, monsieur, the man is guilty," cried M. de Lamotte when they were alone. "My wife never deceived me. She mock at her conjugal obligations! Why, she is virtue itself! Ah! you may be sure that this frightful calumny has been invented, perhaps to cover up a double crime. I throw myself at your feet, I invoke your authority!—"

"Rise, monsieur. This is only the first test, and I admit that he has the advantage thus far. The imagination

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"Rise, monsieur. This is only the first test, and I admit that he has the advantage thus far. The imagination

can hardly conceive of such devilish cunning. I watched him all the time he was speaking and I detected no embarrassment on his face and no contradiction in his statements; if the man is lying, he must be the most consummate hypocrite that ever lived. But I will neglect no means of getting at the truth. To allow a criminal to flatter himself that he is out of danger often puts his prudence to sleep, and I have known them to betray themselves when they thought they had nothing more to fear. Go, monsieur, and rely upon the justice of man, as upon God's justice."

Some days passed, and Derues flattered himself that he was safe from further molestation; everything that he did, every step that he took, was closely watched, but so quietly that he had no suspicion of it. A police commissary, named Mutel, whose reputation for shrewdness and energy was of the best, was put upon his track. All his bloodhounds took the field and scoured Paris for information. They discovered nothing that bore directly upon Madame de Lamotte and her son; but the commissary soon learned that Derues failed three times while he lived on Rue Saint-Victor, that he was proceeded against by numerous creditors, and was several times on the verge of being imprisoned because of his inability to pay his debts. He learned also that in 1771 he was publicly accused of having set fire to his cellar. He made a report covering these different circumstances, and then went to Derues' house. The search which was made there led to nothing. Derues' wife declared that she knew nothing, and the officers took their leave after ransacking the house to no purpose. Derues was not at home; when he returned he found an order to appear again before the lieutenant-general of police.

His first success emboldened him. He appeared before

the magistrate with the utmost assurance, accompanied by his attorney. He loudly complained that the search made in his absence was an attack upon the honor and the privileges of a resident bourgeois, and that they should have awaited his return. With a great show of righteous indignation at M. de Lamotte's treatment of him, he argued that he should be adjudged a slanderer, and demanded damages for the blow he had sought to inflict upon his good name. But on this occasion his effrontery and audacity failed of their effect; the magistrate easily caught him in the act of lying. He maintained that he had paid the hundred thousand livres from his own funds, whereupon he was reminded of his successive failures, of the suits brought by his creditors, and of the judgments rendered against him as an insolvent debtor. With that he changed his tactics; he said that he had borrowed the money from an advocate named Duclos, and had executed a bond therefor before a notary. Despite all his protestations, however, the lieutenant of police committed him to For l'Évêque, with orders to keep him in solitary confinement.

Nothing definite was known as yet; vague rumors passed from shop to shop, and from mouth to mouth among the common people, and began to be whispered in higher circles. A marvelous thing is the infallible instinct of the masses. A great crime is committed which at first baffles investigation. Immediately the public conscience is aroused; before the authorities have even begun to penetrate the maze of uncertainty which surrounds it, while the mystery is still impenetrable, the voice of the people buzzes around, like the hum of a swarm of bees; while the magistrates are hesitating, public inquisitiveness takes hold of the case, and does not let go; it divines the mystery by instinct, and if it changes

its abode, follows it up and points out its new lurking place.

This is what happened when the arrest of Derues became known. The affair was discussed everywhere upon incomplete information and inaccurate reports, in the absence of real publicity. The romance he had invented to justify himself, which was known, as were M. de Lamotte's charges, found no believers. On the other hand all rumors unfavorable to him were seized upon with avidity. There was no trace of any crime, but there was a universal presentiment of some outrageous villainy. Have we not ourselves often witnessed instances of similar excitement? The names of Bastide, Castaing and Papavoine were no sooner uttered than they crowded out every other subject of popular interest. In like manner the public demanded that this mystery should be solved, that light should be thrown upon the dark places, and that society should be avenged.

Derues in his dungeon was not free from apprehension, but his presence of mind and dissimulation did not desert him; day after day he reiterated that he had told the truth. Meanwhile his last invention added to the burden of suspicion that rested upon him; it was discovered that the bond he had given M. Duclos was a mere pretense, and that the latter annulled it by a defeasance of the same date.

Still another circumstance, intended to help him out of his difficulty, made matters much worse for him. On April 8th, M. de Lamotte's solicitor received notes of hand, purporting to come from his wife, to the amount of seventy-eight thousand livres. It seemed an extraordinary thing that these notes, which came by post, should not be accompanied by any letter of advice. Suspicion was at once directed to Derues' wife, who up

to that time had not been molested. The office at which the package was posted was easily ascertained from the letter of the alphabet stamped on the wrapper. Inquiry was made at that office, and it was found that a servant, whom the postmaster described, brought the package there on a certain day and paid the postage on it. The description fitted Derues' maid-servant. She was completely disconcerted when questioned, and answered, after much hesitation, that she acted in obedience to her mistress' orders. Thereupon Derues' wife was committed to For l'Évêque, and her husband transferred to the Grand Châtelet. Being closely questioned she ended by admitting that it was she who sent the notes to M. de Lamotte's solicitor, and that her husband sent them to her, concealed in his soiled linen, which she exchanged for clean.

These were assuredly grave indications of guilt, and if Derues had shown himself to the multitude who were following with growing interest every phase of the affair, a thousand arms would have assumed the duty of the executioner; but from these indications to actual proof of a murder, was a vast distance for the magistrates. Derues maintained his tranquil demeanor, insisting that Madame de Lamotte and her son were alive and would eventually appear and absolve him. Neither stratagem nor threats availed to make him contradict himself, and his unfaltering assurance was enough to shake the most intense conviction.

The perplexity and uncertainty were increased by a new circumstance. A messenger was despatched secretly to Lyon, and his return was expected to supply what might be positive proof.

One morning Derues was taken from his cell to one of the lower rooms in the Conciergerie. The questions

he put to those who led him thither were not answered. The persistent silence of his conductors put him on his guard, and he determined to make no sign, whatever might happen. When they reached their destination, he found Mutel, the police commissary, there with several other persons. The room was ordinarily very dark, and was lighted by several torches; Derues was placed so that the light from one of them would fall full upon his face. He was ordered to look toward a certain part of the room, and as he did so a door opened and a man came in. Derues looked at him unconcernedly, and as the man seemed to be scrutinizing him, he saluted him as one salutes a stranger, whose curiosity one is at a loss to explain.

It was impossible to detect upon his features the slightest trace of emotion; one who had placed his hand upon his heart would have found its beating not accelerated; and yet that man might destroy him!

Mutel went up to the new-comer and whispered:

"Do you recognize him?"

"No."

"Be good enough to go out a moment, monsieur; we will call you in again directly."

This man was the notary from Lyon, in whose office the power of attorney was drawn up, and executed by Derues in female attire under the name of Marie Françoise Perrier, wife of Monsieur de Lamotte.

A woman's dress was brought in, and he was ordered to put it on, which he did willingly enough and with a great show of mirth. While they were helping him to disguise himself, he laughed and smoothed his chin and mimicked a woman's mincing ways; he carried his impudence so far as to ask for a mirror.

"I want to see if I cut a good figure," he said, "and if I mightn't hope to make a conquest or two."

The notary returned; they made Derues walk up and down in front of him, then sit at a table, write, and in short do everything that they thought he might have done in the notary's office. But this second experiment did not lead to identification. The notary hesitated at first, but when he reflected upon the serious results that his testimony might bring about, he declined to say anything definite; he did, however, finally declare that this was not the person who called at his office.

"I am very sorry, monsieur," said Derues as he was leaving the room, "that you were put to inconvenience for the sake of witnessing this absurd farce. Don't blame me for it, but pray heaven that it may enlighten those who dare to accuse me. I am sure that my innocence will soon be made clear, so I forgive them now."

Although in those days the law was expeditious in its operation, and the life of a person accused of crime was surrounded by fewer safeguards than is the case to-day, it was impossible to convict him in the absence of positive proof that any crime had been committed. He was well aware of that fact, and waited patiently in his prison for the moment when he should be triumphantly absolved from the capital charge that was hanging over him. The tempest no longer roared over his head, the most formidable tests had been successfully met, the interrogatories were becoming less frequent, and no longer included anything in the nature of surprises. The lamentations of M. de Lamotte found an echo in the hearts of the magistrates; but his firm conviction was not a sufficient foundation for them to build upon; they pitied him, but could not avenge him.

Thus in certain quarters there began to be a reaction

in favor of the prisoner. Among the dupes of his apparent piety, many who had lost no time in asserting their belief in the charges which seemed likely to crush him, now reverted to the contrary opinion. The bigots and devotees, all those who made a business of kneeling in the churches, crossing themselves in public and dipping their fingers in holy water, all those whose stock in trade consisted in rolling up their eyes and shouting "amen" and "alleluia," began to prate of persecution and martyrdom; he was very near being looked upon as a saint destined by God to work out his salvation in a dungeon. Thence arose discussions and controversies, and this seemingly abortive prosecution, this accusation which could not be substantiated, continued to keep men's minds at fever heat.

To the majority of those who speak of a Supreme Being, and believe in His intervention in the affairs of men, PROVIDENCE is simply a sonorous impressive word, a sort of theatrical device, which helps to make the *dénouement* of the play effective, and which is belauded with a trite phrase or two, issuing from the lips only, not from the heart. It is true that this unknown cause, GOD or CHANCE, so often exhibits an unseasonable blindness and deafness, that one may doubt whether it is on the lookout for certain misdeeds to punish them, when it allows so many others to go unpunished. How many deaths have been shrouded in the darkness of the grave! How many notorious, admitted crimes have been left to slumber peacefully in insolent, unblushing prosperity! We know the names of many criminals, but who can tell the number of forgotten or undiscovered victims? The history of humanity is twofold, and just as the invisible world contains more marvelous things than the material world which science has explored, so that part of the

history of humanity which is told in books is not the most interesting and most remarkable. Without suggesting any more such questions, without protesting here against the sophistries which cast a veil before the conscience, and conceal from it the presence of an avenging God, but leaving the facts to appeal to every man's understanding, we have but to relate the last episode in this long and horrible drama.

Of all the populous districts of Paris in which the Derues affair was discussed, none was more agitated over it than the neighborhood of the Place de Grève, and no one of the streets in the vicinity was more of a rallying-point for interested groups than Rue de la Mortellerie. It was not that a hidden instinct attracted the crowd to the very spot where the crime was buried; but every day their attention was drawn to a pitiful spectacle. A grief-stricken man passed through the street, hardly able to drag himself along, with pallid cheek, and eyes swimming with tears. It was M. de Lamotte, whose lodgings were, as we have said, on Rue de la Mortellerie, and who seemed to hover about like a spectre about a tomb. They always stood aside as he passed, and removed their hats; every one respected his terrible misfortune. When he had disappeared the groups formed again, and the discussions were continued until evening.

On April 17th, about four in the afternoon, a score of gossips and workmen were standing together in front of a certain shop. A stout woman, perched upon the top step like an orator on a platform, was haranguing and telling for the hundredth time what she knew, or rather what she did not know. There were listening ears and wide-open mouths; thrills of excitement ran through the group, so much indignant fervor did the widow Masson,

who had taken it into her head to be eloquent at sixty years, throw into her narrative.

Suddenly silence fell upon the crowd, and they drew aside to let M. de Lamotte pass. One man ventured to ask him:

"Is there anything new?"

He sadly shook his head, unable to speak, and passed on.

"Is that M. de Lamotte?" queried an unkempt, slovenly old woman, with wisps of gray hair peering out beneath the cap that was perched on one side of her head: "ah! so that's M. de Lamotte?"

"*Pardine!*" said a bystander, "don't you know him yet? we see him every day."

"Oh! excuse me; I don't belong hereabouts, and, no offence, the street isn't of the kind to make one walk here for amusement. Not because you live here, but it's a bit dirty."

"And madame usually rides in her carriage!"

"That would suit you better than me, my dear; you wouldn't have to buy shoes to keep your feet whole."

They began to jostle her.

"Wait a minute! wait a minute!" she said; "I didn't mean to offend anyone. I'm not rich, sure enough, but that's no disgrace, and one doesn't need to steal to get enough to buy a glass of ratafia. Say there, my stout friend, you understand, don't you? A drop for Mother Maniffet, and of the best! If the fair princess here chooses to clink a glass with me, and make up, let her say so; I'll pay."

The old hawker's example was contagious, and instead of filling two glasses only, the widow Masson emptied a bottle.

"Ah! that's the right stuff!" cried Mother Maniffet, "and my idea brought you good luck."

"Faith, I needed it."

"What's that? you complaining about business?"

"Ah! don't mention it; it's wretched!"

"There's no business nowadays. Why, I yell myself hoarse all day, and ruin my voice to earn four sous. I don't know what's going to become of us. But you seem to have a very nice little trade here."

"Oh, pshaw! what does that amount to with a house on one's hands? Fate's against me; the old tenants leave, and the new ones don't show up."

"Why, what's happened to you?"

"I believe the devil's in it. On the first floor there was a most excellent man, and he's gone; on the third a respectable family, very well behaved, except that the husband beat his wife every night, and so they kept people awake; they're gone, too. I put out bills and nobody looks at them. Two or three months ago, about the middle of December, the day of the last execution—"

"The 15th," said the peddler, "I cried it; I know all about that; it's my business."

"All right, the 15th then," assented the widow Masson. "Well, on that day I let my cellar to a man, a dealer in wines, who paid for the first quarter in advance, as I didn't know him, and wouldn't have loaned two sous on his looks. He was a little piece of a man, no taller than that, with little round eyes which weren't at all to my taste. However, he paid, so I had nothing to say; but here it's well along in the second quarter, and I don't hear a word of my tenant."

"Well! well! haven't you ever seen him since?"

"Yes, once; no, twice. Let me think a bit—yes, three times, I'm sure. He came first with a cart and a

porter; they lowered a great trunk into the cellar, a chest in which he said there was wine in bottles. No, he came before that with a workman, I believe. Faith, I don't know whether it was before or after, but it's all the same. I know he said it was wine in bottles. The last time he brought a mason and they had a row down there, for I heard them yelling at each other. He carried away the key, and I haven't seen him since, nor his wine either. I have another key to the cellar and I've been down there. Perhaps the rats have drunk the wine and eaten the trunk, but there's nothing there now. I am certain, though, of what I saw: a great chest, brand new, and all tied up with rope."

"What day was it?" queried the hawker.

"What day? *pardine!* it was—oh! I can't remember—"

"Nor I—my thoughts are getting a little mixed. What do you say? just a swallow to brush up my memory."

The expedient did not at first seem well devised, and the memory refused to be refreshed. The crowd, as may be imagined, was most attentive.

"What a fool I am!" cried the hawker. "Wait till I find that paper, if I still have it."

She fumbled hastily in the pocket of her petticoat, and pulled out several crumpled pieces of dirty paper. While she unfolded them one after another, she said:

"A big chest, wasn't it?"

"Yes."

"Brand new?"

"Brand new."

"And tied with ropes?"

"I can see it now."

"So can I—*pardine!* It was the day I was crying

the story of Leroi de Valeries. It was the first of February."

"Yes, a Saturday; the next day was Sunday, I know."

"That's it, that's it, Saturday, February 1st. Well, I know that trunk; I saw your wine-dealer on the Place du Louvre, and he wasn't having a very good time; one of his creditors wanted to seize the trunk and the wine and the whole business. A little fellow, wasn't he? a regular abortion?"

"Yes."

"With red hair?"

"With red hair."

"And a canting leer?"

"Yes."

"And a hypocrite he is to make one shudder! I believe you that he can't pay his rent! a rascal, my lads, a regular scalawag who started a fire in his cellar, and accused me of trying to steal from him, when himself, the villain, cheated me out of a twenty-four sou piece. Isn't it lucky that I happened this way! Well! well! this is a joke! Here's another pretty rod in pickle for you, and I guess you'll have to tell where your wine has flown to, my poor gossip Derues!"

"Derues!" exclaimed twenty voices at once.

"Derues, who is in prison?"

"The man M. de Lamotte is after?"

"Who killed his wife?"

"Who ate up his son?"

"A dog, my friends, who swore that I stole from him! a downright monster!"

"There's only one little difficulty," interposed the widow Masson, "and that is that he's not the man. My man's name was Ducoudray. Here it is in my book."

"Saperlotte! they're not much alike," rejoined the

hawker; "that bothers me a little. Oh! but I have a fine grudge against that vagabond, who accused me of stealing. I told him I would sell his paper some day. If that happens I'll treat the crowd."

Pending the fulfilment of this promise they emptied a second bottle of ratafia. The liquor went to their heads, and they chattered away a long while at random; at last the crowd gradually dispersed.

That evening Rue de la Mortellerie was as silent as usual. But, some few hours after this scene, the residents were surprised to see men whom they did not know station themselves at either end of the street, while other men of ominous aspect went back and forth all night as if they were doing patrol duty. The next morning a carriage escorted by gendarmes stopped in front of widow Masson's door. A police commissary alighted from it and entered a house near by; he came out in about fifteen minutes with M. de Lamotte leaning on his arm. The commissary asked widow Masson for the key of the cellar which one Ducoudray had hired in the preceding December. He went down into the cellar with one of his agents and M. de Lamotte.

The stopping of the carriage at that door and the presence of the commissary, taken in connection with the conversation of the night before, created no end of excitement. But the denizens of the quarter could manifest their interest only within doors, for they were all under arrest and confined rigorously to their own houses. It was a curious sight to see all the faces at the windows, eagerly questioning one another with their eyes, in anticipation of some startling development; and the universal ignorance of what was toward, the mysterious preparations, and the silent execution of Mutel's

orders, redoubled their interest and added a dash of terror to it.

At first no one could see who had come in the carriage with the commissary; three men remained inside, one under guard of two others. When the lumbering vehicle turned into Rue de la Mortellerie, the former tried to look out through the closed glass and said:

"Where are we?"

When he was told, he rejoined:

"I don't know that street; I never even passed through it."

He said this with his ordinary calmness of manner, and then asked another question:

"Why am I brought here?"

When he saw that he could obtain no answer, he resumed his unconcerned demeanor, and exhibited no emotion when the carriage stopped, and he saw M. de Lamotte enter the widow Masson's shop.

The commissary came to the door and ordered Derues to be brought in.

There were police agents in the group of the day before, and they heard the street-hawker's story of meeting Derues near the Louvre escorting a heavy trunk. During the evening the lieutenant of police was notified. It was a clue, a ray of light, perhaps the truth itself brought to light by a chance word. Measures were taken to prevent any person from going in or out of the street thereafter without being watched and followed. They believed they were on the trace of the crime, but the criminal might have accomplices, doing a sort of anti-police duty, who, being warned at the same time, would hasten to remove the evidence of the crime if any existed.

Derues was between two men, each of whom held an

arm. A third with a torch walked in front. The commissary with several other persons, also carrying torches and provided with picks and shovels, brought up the rear. In this order they went down the stairs into the cellar.

There was something ghastly about this dismal procession. To see those dark, stern faces surrounding that pallid, resigned man, pass under the damp arches, lighted only by the pale flickering flame of the torches, one might have fancied that he was looking on in a dream at some secret execution. When the light was admitted into that dark charnel-house, it seemed as if it illuminated its darkest corners, as if the bright light of truth at last pierced that dense blackness, and as if voices issued from the ground and the walls.

As his eyes fell upon the murderer M. de Lamotte cried:

"Villain! this is where you killed my wife and my son!"

Derues met his glance calmly and said:

"I beg you, monsieur, do not add insult to the misery you have caused. If you were in my place and I in yours, I should feel some pity and some respect for such misery. What is wanted of me? What have I to do here, and why am I brought here?"

He was in ignorance of what had transpired the day before, and could think of no one but the mason who had helped him bury the body. He felt that he was lost; but his self-possession did not abandon him.

"You are brought here first of all to be confronted with this woman," said the commissary, leading forward the widow Masson.

"I don't know her."

"But I know you well enough. You hired this cellar of me under the name of Ducoudray."

Derues shrugged his shoulders and retorted bitterly:

"I can understand putting a man to the question if he's guilty; but when, in order to justify your profession of prosecutor and find a criminal somewhere, you bring from a hundred leagues away false witnesses whom their own evidence proves to be liars, when you set on the *canaille*, when you lend an innocent man different features and imaginary names, so that you can elicit from him a surprised or indignant gesture to be turned against him; all this, I say, is infamous and goes beyond any right that God has given mankind to judge one another! I do not know this woman; whatever she may say or do, I have nothing more to say."

All the commissary's skill, all his threats were of no avail against this determination. In vain did the widow Masson repeat again and again, and declare upon her honor that she recognized him, that he introduced himself to her under the name of Ducoudray, and that he had a great chest containing wine in bottles carried down into the cellar; Derues stood with his arms folded, as unconcerned as if he were blind and deaf.

They hammered on the walls, examined the condition of the stones, sounded the earth in several places, and discovered no sign. Must they withdraw, completely foiled? The commissary had already given the signal to his men, when the one who had remained in the cellar with M. de Lamotte, and from where he stood in the shadow, carefully watched Derues' face when he first came in, came forward and said, pointing to the spot under the stairs where the hole was dug:

"Feel there. His eyes turned in this direction instinctively at first; I was watching him, and it's the

only sign he has given. There was no one but myself in a position to see him, and he couldn't see me. He's very sharp, but one doesn't think of everything, and may the devil take me if I didn't discover his burrow!"

"Wretch!" said Derues to himself, "so you have had me under your paw for an hour, amusing yourself by prolonging my agony! Oh! I ought to have thought of that, and I have found my master! But no matter! you will read nothing on my face, nor on the bits of flesh you dig up; the worms and the poison cannot have left anything recognizable."

An iron-shod stick was thrust into the ground, and encountered a hard, resistant body at the depth of four feet. Two men were put at work and shoveled the dirt away vigorously. Every eye was fastened upon the hole, which grew larger with every shovelful of earth that the two laborers threw out upon the floor. M. de Lamotte felt his strength giving way and his emotion infected the whole party with the exception of Derues. At last the shovels struck dully upon wood, and the noise made everyone shudder. The trunk was uncovered and lifted out of the trench; they opened it and found the dead body of a woman in a chemise, with a red and white cap upon her head, and the face turned downward. The body was turned over and M. de Lamotte recognized his wife, the face not being disfigured.

The feeling of horror was so intense that no one of those present could cry out or utter a word. Derues, busily engaged in reckoning up the uncertain chances that still remained of escaping his threatened doom, did not notice that one of the agents went out, at a word from Mutel, before the digging began. Everybody fell away from the vicinity of the body, and from the murderer, who alone did not change his position, and was

mumbling prayers. The torches which were stuck into the ground cast a reddish light upon the terrible scene.

Suddenly Derues started and turned around as he heard a terrified shriek behind him. He saw his wife, who had been hastily brought thither. The commissary grasped her arm with one hand, and taking up one of the torches with the other, forced her to lean over the body.

"It's Madame de Lamotte!" he cried.

"Yes, yes," said she, under the influence of the first shock, "yes, I recognize her!"

She could bear the sight no longer; the color fled from her cheeks, and she fell fainting on the floor. The two prisoners were taken away separately. One would have said that the discovery had become known without the instant it was made, and the populace pursued with imprecations and shouts of "assassin" and "poisoner," the carriage which bore Derues away. During the drive he said nothing; but just as he was entering his cell, he said:

"I must have lost my wits when I undertook to keep secret the death and burial of Madame de Lamotte; that is the only sin I have committed; I am innocent of all the rest, and I bow like a true Christian to the harsh decrees of Providence."

It was the only plan of defence that was left open to him, and he adopted it without any other hope than that he might impose upon the authorities by redoubling his hypocrisy and his pious cant. But his whole structure of fraud and falsehood was tottering to its fall. Every moment brought some fresh crushing disclosure. He admitted that Madame de Lamotte died suddenly at his house, and that he buried her secretly, lest he might be suspected of her death. But the doctors who

were present when the body was opened deposed that she was poisoned with corrosive sublimate and opium. The pretended payment appeared in its true light, as a wicked theft, the work of a forger. Then another question to which he could not reply arose like a menacing spectre. They turned his own admission against him. Why did he take young De Lamotte to Versailles, knowing that he would not find his mother there? What had become of him? What had he done with him? Once upon the scent, justice soon found out the cooper with whom he had taken lodgings. By virtue of a decree of the Parliament of Paris, the body interred under the name of Beaupré was exhumed; the cooper identified it by a shirt which he gave to bury the boy in. Derues, in the face of this overwhelming evidence, confessed that the young man died of indigestion complicated by the after-effects of another disease. The physicians testified to the presence of corrosive sublimate and opium in this case also.

He met all these multiplied proofs of his guilt with feigned resignation, and wept incessantly for Edouard whom he loved as dearly as his own son.

"Alas!" he would say, "I see the poor child every night! but my grief is made less poignant by my knowledge that he had at least the solace of religion. God sees me," he would add, "and knows that I am innocent; He will enlighten the magistrates, and my honor will be rehabilitated."

After due hearing and examination of the cause, Derues was sentenced by the court of the Châtelet on the 30th of April, and the sentence was confirmed by the Parliament of Paris on May 5th. It may be found in the Archives, and is in these words:

"In the matter of the criminal process instituted by the provost of Paris or his lieutenant at the Châtelet, at

the request of the deputy of the king's procureur-general, against Antoine-François Derues and Marie Louise Nicolaïs, his wife, now imprisoned at the Conciergerie du Palais at Paris, appellants from the judgment pronounced upon said process on the 30th April, 1777, whereby said Antoine-François Derues was declared duly accused and convicted of having (with the purpose of appropriating to his own use without consideration the estate of Buisson-Sonef, belonging to Monsieur and Madame Saint-Faust de Lamotte, from whom he had purchased said estate by private deed of December 22d, 1775, and by wickedly abusing the hospitality which he extended to said Madame de Lamotte from December 16th last, the day that she arrived in Paris to conclude the bargain made with him in December, 1775, and with her son took up her abode with said Derues for that purpose and at his solicitation) poisoned with premeditated malice aforethought the said Madame de Lamotte, either in a medicine compounded and prepared by him on January 30th last, and administered to her on the following day, or in the draughts which he alone administered to her after said medicine, on January 31st last (having taken the precaution to send his servant to the country for two or three days, and to keep strangers away from the room where said Madame de Lamotte was in bed), of which poison said Madame de Lamotte died during the night of said 31st of January last; of having kept said death secret, of having himself placed the body of said Madame de Lamotte in a trunk, and of having caused it to be transported clandestinely to Rue de la Mortellerie and placed in a cellar hired by him for that purpose under the assumed name of Ducoudray, and where he himself buried it or caused it to be buried; of having led said Madame de Lamotte's son (who, as well as his

mother, lodged with him from the time of their arrival in Paris until the 15th of January last, when he was placed at a boarding-school) to believe that said Madame de Lamotte was at Versailles and wished him to join her there; and of having, upon that pretext, taken said Monsieur de Lamotte, the younger, on the 12th of February last (after giving him chocolate to drink for breakfast), to said Versailles and to a furnished room in a cooper's house there; and of having in like manner poisoned said Monsieur de Lamotte, the younger, with premeditated malice aforethought, either in the chocolate taken by him before his departure, or in the draughts and medicines which he himself compounded, prepared and administered to said Monsieur de Lamotte, the younger, during the 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th of February last, while he lay sick in said furnished chamber, the said Derues refusing to summon physicians or surgeons, despite the rapid progress of the disease and the representations made to him on that subject, saying that he was himself a physician and surgeon; of which poison said Monsieur de Lamotte, the younger, died on the 15th day of February last, at nine o'clock in the evening, in the arms of said Derues, who affected the most profound grief, weeping profusely, and even exhorted said Monsieur de Lamotte to prepare for death, and recited the prayers for the dying; and after the death he laid the body out himself, saying that the deceased requested him to do so, and giving the people in the house to understand that he died of the venereal disease; and of having caused the body to be interred on the following day, in the cemetery of the parish church of Saint-Louis, at said Versailles, and of having caused the death to be inscribed upon the mortuary registers of said parish church with a false place of birth

and under the false name of Beaupré, which Derues himself assumed when he rented said furnished room, and gave to said Monsieur de Lamotte, the younger, whom he declared to be his nephew; and of having, in order to cover up his atrocious deeds, and to succeed in appropriating said estate of Buisson-Sonef, calumniated said Madame de Lamotte, and resorted to divers schemes, and committed several forgeries, to wit:

"1st. By subscribing or procuring others to subscribe the name of said Madame de Lamotte to a private deed in duplicate between Derues and his wife of the one part, and said Madame de Lamotte, acting under her husband's power of attorney, of the other part (said deed being dated February 12th, subsequent to the decease of said Madame de Lamotte); by which deed said Madame de Lamotte was made to change the terms previously agreed upon and set forth in the former instrument of December 22d, 1775, and to acknowledge the receipt from said Derues of the sum of one hundred thousand livres, on account of the price of the Buisson estate.

"2d. By subscribing before a notary, on the 9th day of February last, a fictitious obligation to a third party for one hundred thousand livres, in order to give plausibility to the payment alleged to have been made.

"3d. By announcing publicly, and stating under the sanction of an oath, at the time of his examination before the commissary Mutel, that he did actually pay said hundred thousand livres to said Madame de Lamotte in cash, and that she fled with her son and a certain other person, with that sum in her possession.

"4th. By depositing with a notary the instrument containing the pretended receipt for said sum of one hundred thousand livres, and seeking the aid of the law

to enforce said instrument and to be put in possession of said estate.

"5th. By subscribing or causing another person to subscribe, before notaries in the city of Lyon, whither he went for that purpose, a power of attorney, dated March 12th, whereby the pretended Madame de Lamotte was made to confirm the receipt of one hundred thousand livres and to empower Monsieur de Lamotte, her husband, to receive the balance due of the purchase-money of said estate—which power of attorney he produced as a proof of the existence of said Madame de Lamotte.

"6th. By causing the notes of hand, claimed to have been given in payment to said Madame de Lamotte, to be forwarded to an attorney in the name of said Madame de Lamotte, on April 8th, 1777—at which time he was in prison and had been obliged to abandon his fable of the payment of said sum in cash, and had substituted therefor a pretended payment in notes of hand.

"7th. And lastly, by maintaining at all times and seasons, until the discovery of said Madame de Lamotte's body, that she was still alive, and that he had seen her in the city of Lyon as is hereinbefore set forth.

"He is sentenced to be punished therefor, etc., etc.

"His property is declared confiscated to the king, or to whoever may be entitled to it, the sum of two hundred livres being first deducted therefrom by way of fine, in the event that said property is not confiscated to his Majesty; and a further sum of six hundred livres to pay for prayers for the repose of the souls of said Madame de Lamotte and her son; and before execution said Antoine-François Derues shall be subjected to the ordinary and extraordinary torture, that he be made to divulge the truth as to any facts connected with the cause, and the names of his accomplices. Judgment in

the matter of said Marie-Louise Nicolaïs, wife of Derues, is postponed until the execution of this sentence. It is also ordered that the certificate of death of said De Lamotte, the younger, dated February 16th last, be corrected upon the mortuary registers of the parish church of Saint-Louis at Versailles, and that his true name be substituted thereon, and that said Monsieur de Lamotte, senior, and all others interested, make application to this effect to the judges competent to act therein; and it is further ordered that said sentence be, at the instance of the deputy of the king's procureur-general at the Châtelet, printed, published and posted in all the customary places throughout the city, *prevoté* and *vicomté* of Paris and wherever else may be necessary.

"On the petition of Pierre Étienne de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, *écuyer de la grande écurie du roi*, lord of Grange-Flandre, Buisson-Sonef, Valperfond and other places, widower and reciprocal donee of Marie-Françoise Perrier, his wife, according to their marriage contract executed in the presence of Baron and his colleague, notaries at Paris, on September 5th, 1762, the said de Lamotte praying to be admitted as intervener in the proceedings against Derues and his accomplices, in the matter of the assassination and poisoning of the wife and son of said Monsieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, upon the accusation made by him to the deputy procureur-general at the Châtelet, and now pending in this court, upon the report of the sentence pronounced in said cause on the 30th of April last—granting leave to intervene, it was ordered that from the most available property relinquished by the condemned, there should be taken, before the claims of the treasury attached, and in diminution thereof, the sum of six thousand livres or such other sum as it should please the court to adjudge; from which sum of six

thousand livres the said Saint-Faust de Lamotte consents that there be deducted the sum of two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight livres which he agrees was sent or handed to him by said Derues and his wife at divers times; and said sum of six thousand livres or such other sum is to be employed by said Monsieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, who is hereby authorized so to employ it, in establishing at the parish church of Saint-Nicolas at Villeneuve-le-Roi, in which parish the estate of Buisson-Bonef is situated, a perpetual, annual service for the repose of the souls of his wife and son, a minute whereof should be inserted in the decree granting leave to intervene, and an extract from said decree or minute be inscribed upon a stone to be set in the wall of said church of Saint-Nicolas at Villeneuve-le-Roi at such point as may be determined; the private deed of sale given by the late wife of said Monsieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte to Derues and his wife, as of December 22d, 1775, to be declared null and void, as having never been carried out by payment of the price, nor acknowledged before a notary; the forged instrument of the 12th of February last, as well as all other documents fabricated by said Derues or others, as set forth herein, and all those which may be presented in the future, to be in like manner declared null and void.

"The court says that the judgment of the lieutenants of the Châtelet de Paris against said Derues must be sustained, and that he had no valid ground of appeal;

"The court orders that the sentence shall have its full effect as regards Marie-Louise Nicolaïs, and sentences her to pay the ordinary fine of 12 livres. Decision is withheld upon the petition of Pierre Étienne de Saint-Faust de Lamotte of the 2d of the present month of May, until

after judgment on the postponement accorded said Marie-Louise Nicolaïs.

"*Signed:* DE GOURGUES, président;
OUTREMONT, conseiller-rapporteur."

Derues' self-possession and assurance did not fail him for an instant. He declaimed for more than three-quarters of an hour before the parliament, and his argument was remarkable for the coolness he displayed and for the skill with which he brought forth all the circumstances which could possibly create the least doubt in the minds of the magistrates, and mitigate the severity of the original sentence. Although found guilty on every point, he continued to affirm his innocence of the poisoning. Remorse, which is too often nothing more than the fear of punishment, gained no foothold in his soul. The anticipation of the torture did not terrify him. As strong of will as he was feeble of body, he determined to die like a martyr in behalf of his religion, hypocrisy. The god whom he glorified in his last hours was falsehood.

On May 6th, at seven in the morning, his sentence was read to him. He listened quietly, and when it was read through, he said:

"I did not expect such a harsh sentence."

Some two or three hours later the apparatus for administering the question was prepared, and he was told that if he chose to confess his crimes and the names of his accomplices, he would be relieved from that aggravation of his punishment.

"I will say nothing more," he replied. "I know what terrible suffering awaits me; I know that I am to die to-day; but I have nothing to confess."

He made no resistance when his knees and legs were

bound, and underwent the torture with great courage. But, in a moment of intense suffering, he cried:

"Accursed gold! to what a pass have you brought me!"

They thought the pain had at last conquered his determination, and the magistrate, who presided at the torture, leaned over him and said:

"Unhappy man! confess your crimes, since you are about to die."

He recovered his self-control, and met the magistrate's gaze.

"I am well aware, monseigneur," he said, "that I have less than three hours perhaps to live."

The apparent weakness of his constitution gave rise to a fear that he might not be able to stand the last wedges, and the operator was ordered to stop. When his legs and knees were unbound they laid him on a mattress and gave him a glass of wine, of which he drank but a few drops; the priest in attendance then heard him in confession. When the dinner hour arrived, they brought him soup and boiled beef, of which he ate heartily. He asked the jailer if he was to have nothing more, and an entrée was put before him. One would have supposed that this meal was the last before his release, not that it immediately preceded his death. At last the clock struck three; it was the hour appointed for him to leave the prison.

Paris at that moment, according to the report of persons of the utmost credibility whom we have consulted, presented a remarkable appearance, which those who witnessed it are not likely to forget. The vast hive was stirred to its lowest depths. It may have been by chance or by design that there was a powerful counter-attraction the same day in the shape of a great celebration on

the plain of Grenelle in honor of a German prince. The whole court was present, and more than one great lady assuredly thought with regret of the excitement of the other festival, which would be enjoyed by none but the bourgeoisie and the vulgar herd. The rest of the city was deserted, the houses closed, the streets silent. A stranger suddenly set down in the heart of that solitude would have thought that some deadly scourge had stricken it with death during the night, and that naught remained but a labyrinth of untenanted dwellings to bear witness to the bustle and animation of the day before. Dark clouds lowered over the abandoned city; vivid lightning flashes ploughed their way through them at intervals, and the rumble of the thunder in the distance was answered by the roar of the cannon at the royal fête. The two powers of heaven and earth shared the throng between them. On one side, God in His terrible majesty, on the other side royalty with its vain pomp—everlasting damnation and perishable grandeur in juxtaposition. As a rushing mountain torrent seeks a new course, and leaves its old bed dry, so the stream of the populace had departed from its customary bed. Wherever the procession of death was to pass, men and women were packed together by thousands; an ocean of heads was waving to and fro like the spikes of a field of grain. The old houses rented for the occasion for large sums, tottered beneath the crowds of eager spectators, and all the window-sashes were removed, that the view of those within might be unobstructed.

Derues, clad in the shirt worn by those under sentence of death, and with a placard in front and behind bearing the words, "WILFUL POISONER," descended with unfaltering step the main staircase of the Châtelet. It was

at this time, as his eyes fell upon the crucifix, that he cried:

"O Man, I am about to suffer as Thou didst!"

He climbed into the tumbril, and looked out upon the crowd to right and left. During the journey he recognized and bowed to several of his former fellow-tradesmen, and said adieu at the top of his voice to the wife of the man with whom he served his apprenticeship. This woman said afterward that she never saw such a benignant expression on anybody's face. When the cart stopped in front of Notre-Dame, where the clerk awaited him, he alighted without assistance, took in his hand a lighted wax candle weighing two pounds, and there, on his knees, barefooted and bareheaded, with a rope around his neck, he made public apology and repeated the words of his sentence. He then returned to the cart amid the hooting and maledictions of the populace, to which he seemed absolutely indifferent. A single voice, which was making a mighty effort to be heard above the uproar, made him turn his head; it was the voice of the street-hawker, hawking his sentence, and from time to time she interrupted herself to say to him:

"Ah! my poor gossip Derues, how do you fancy that equipage? Oh! yes, mumble your prayers, and look up at the sky; there's no one now to take any stock in your wry faces. Ah! you villain! to say that I stole from you! I told you that I'd be hawking your paper some day!"

Then mingling her own grievances with the list of his other crimes, she declared that Parliament had sentenced him for accusing her of theft as well as for poisoning Madame de Lamotte and her son.

When he reached the foot of the scaffold, he looked about and heard an impatient muttering run from group

to group. He smiled, and as if he were determined to make sport of his fellow-men to the end, asked leave to go to the Hôtel de Ville, which was granted, in the hope that he would finally decide to confess; but he persisted in saying that he was innocent of the poisoning.* He

*The following is a copy of the document on file at the Archives Nationales, which enables us to fix the culprit's name, and which contains some details of the proceedings:

"*Report of the Execution, or Dying Confession, of Antoine-François Derues.*

"In the year 1777, on Tuesday, May 10, at two o'clock post meridian, we, Charles Simon Bachois de Villefort, of the King's Council, criminal lieutenant at the Châtelet of the city, prevoté and vicomté of Paris, repaired to a room in the Hôtel de Ville to superintend the execution of the decree of Parliament of the fifth of May instant, confirmatory of the sentence of the criminal chamber of the Châtelet of the thirtieth of April last, which, among other things, sentenced said Antoine-François Derues to make public apology in front of the main doorway of the cathedral at Paris, and thereafter to be broken and burned alive by the king's executioner on the Place de Grève—and being in said room accompanied by Germain Morin, clerk of the criminal chamber of said Châtelet, who was present in front of said cathedral to hear said public apology, and afterwards came to the Hôtel de Ville, we ordered said Antoine-François Derues to be brought before us, as we had been informed that he had disclosures to make. Thereupon said Antoine-François Derues was brought to the room where we were, by the executioner aforesaid, and having been sworn to tell the truth, informed us that to acquit his conscience, he felt bound to declare that he had no share in the deaths of Madame de Lamotte and her son, that, if they were poisoned, it was not of his doing, and that he had nothing to reproach himself for save the clandestine removal of Madame de Lamotte's body, which he buried on Rue de la Mortellerie; that his wife took no part in what he did in that matter; that after the death of De Lamotte the younger and his own return to Paris he told his wife nothing of what had taken place at Versailles, but simply said that he had taken the boy to his mother, in whose continued existence he always made her believe. He said that he handed his wife the watch belonging to Monsieur de Lamotte the younger, but could not say on what day he handed it to her; that the watch was given by him to said De Lamotte the younger, to bind the bargain for the sale of the estate; that after his death he took the watch again; and that when he handed it to his wife he said that he had promised another to the boy, because he asked him for one with less ornaments, and asked his wife to change it; he said that he knew that she did change it at a watchmaker's with whom she had acted as sponsor for the child of a (here there is an illegible word), but whose name he did not know; that she took a plain gold watch and a silver one, and gave some money in addition; that the silver watch was given by him to Monsieur de Lamotte's servant in acknowledgment of the assistance he had rendered him in purchasing the estate, and that he had

had an interview with his wife, who swooned when she saw him, and was unable to speak for more than quarter of an hour. He lavished the most endearing epithets upon her, and manifested deep emotion to see her in such

promised it to him long before, etc., etc. He declared that his wife had no idea what the trunk contained; that she was absolutely ignorant of the death of Madame de Lamotte and her son; that he resorted to fifty different subterfuges to conceal the truth from her, and that she is entirely innocent; that he was guilty of no crime which he ought to confess.

"He maintained also that he did not sign the power of attorney at Lyon, but that it was a woman who signed it, etc.

"This is all that said Antoine-François Derues said that he wished to say to us.

"After this was read to him he persisted and signed it, and before signing said that he thought it his duty to make one observation, namely, that in answer to the various questions put to him by his wife as to what had become of Madame de Lamotte and her son, he closed her mouth again and again, saying:

"'My dear wife, I beg you not to question me on this subject; I have made satisfactory arrangements with them, never fear; I have acted for the best; don't ask me, for reasons which I can't give you.'

"That he used similar language to evade answering all her questions, etc., etc. Again he declared that she knew nothing of the fate of Madame de Lamotte and her son, and insisted that he had nothing to do with poisoning either of them.

"He declared that he was not guilty of the murder of Monsieur Duplessis, nor of that of Monsieur Petit (this name is doubtful) at Chartres, which murders he understood that some persons attributed to him; that it was quite true that he did call upon said Petit at Chartres in 1775, said Petit having formerly been his confessor; that his purpose was to request his good offices in reconciling him with his cousin, Mademoiselle Derues, who lived at Chartres; that nothing else was discussed between them, and that, speaking generally, he had no murder on his conscience.

"Which is all that said Antoine-François Derues, condemned, said that he had to declare to us. All the above was read to him, and he persisted in his statements, and signed.

"BACHOIS, DERUES, MORIN."

The signatures, in the order given above, are written at the foot of three pages. Derues' handwriting is heavy and ugly to look at, but large and perfectly legible. The signature on the first page is written with a firm hand, the second is less firm, and the third is quite shaky. The leading comic playwright of our day, in his play of "Le Procès Criminel," makes an old woman, who thirsts for the excitement of the Assize Court, say:

"We shall have autographs."

Here is one which we recommend to the fair creatures who send their albums to Lacenaire. It would be very easy to cut off the name of Derues from one of the pages, and it would cut an honorable figure in their collection.

wretched case. When they bade her withdraw he asked permission to embrace her, and his farewell to her was most touching. His last words to her were preserved:

"My dear wife," he said, "I commend my dear children to your care; bring them up in the fear of God. Do you go to Chartres and see the bishop whom I had the honor to pay my respects to on my last visit, and who has always been my protector. I believe he has sufficient esteem for me to justify the hope that he will have compassion on you and our children."

It was then seven o'clock at night and the people were beginning to murmur at the long delay. At last the culprit appeared. A spectator who saw him go into the Hôtel de Ville, and who was carried by the surging of the crowd to the foot of the scaffold, has told us that when he was given over to the executioner he removed his own clothes. He kissed the instrument of punishment most devoutly, and also kissed the crucifix several times; then he stretched himself out upon the Saint Andrew's cross, requesting with a resigned smile that his suffering might be made as brief as possible.

As soon as his head was covered the executioner gave the signal. It was supposed that two or three blows would be sufficient to finish such a starveling creature; but he proved to be as tenacious of life as those venomous reptiles that must be crushed and torn to shreds before they will die. They were obliged to give him the *coup de grâce.** The executioner uncovered the head and showed the confessor that the eyes were closed and

*The condemned man received two blows on each arm, one above the wrist, the other above the small of the arm; a blow on each leg, and one on each thigh. The ninth, called the *coup de grâce*, was dealt in the pit of the stomach. The wood of the cross was hollowed out beneath each of those portions of the body at which the blows were aimed; these cavities were called *porte-à-faux*.

the heart had ceased to beat. The body was removed from the cross, and after the feet and hands were tied together, was thrown upon the pile and burned.

While the execution was in progress the populace applauded. The next day they bought bits of his charred bones, and hurried to the lottery offices, convinced that the precious relics would bring luck to their owners!

In 1779 Derues' wife was sentenced to imprisonment for life and committed to the Salpêtrière. At the time of the massacre in the prisons, in September, 1792, she was one of the first victims.